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The Games machine

COMPUTER LEISURE ENTERTAINMENT

TX026 JANUARY 1990

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Over 80 games reviewed!

FIRST!

DIE HARD

From blockbusting movie to computer game: we review Activision's 1990 release — hot from the States

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Will Ocean be flying high?

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TGM's US supplement interviews the designers of Atari's Lynx hand-held games machine

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Screenshots Atari ST

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The Games machine

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Everyone knows how easy and relatively cheap it is to grab and digitize pictures. But did you know that it's even cheaper — and a lot easier — to synthesize your favourite sounds? Whether they're from CD, record, video or live speech, there's nothing to stop you from saying 'I'm having that!'... over and over again.

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Reduced in size to cope for the extra reviews this month. Readerpage is still full of people who need to air their views. And if that bores you to death, try solving Mel Croucher's Trivia Quiz.

NO MERCY–NO SURRENDER

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You've fallen into Bad Company. In this place there are no good guys, just you, your sidekick and wave upon wave of insectoid enemies who have just one thing in mind - the total destruction of every human they set their nasty little bug eyes on. No quarter is asked and none is given, you know what to do - if it's alien, blast it!

Bad Company is programming legend Steve Bak's latest and greatest masterwork with scrolling of vanishing point perspective surfaces, the [illegible] superfast 3D [illegible] techniques and featuring:

- Simultaneous two-player option
- Unique choice of weaponry, with fire power boosters
- Choice of eight different combat heroes
- Uncountable waves of sickening insectoid attack

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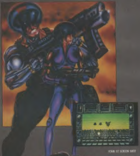
ATARI ST SCREEN SHOT

STAR-BLAZE...

StarBlaze is pure solid vector 3D Shoot 'em Up from the programmers that brought you 16 bit Elite! To qualify as a Tomsinian warrior in an intergalactic war of unparalled ferocity, you must prove your prowess by taking on scores of fiendish alien attack waves and live to tell the tale. How will you do it? With quick reactions and the fastest trigger finger on the planet !

StarBlaze is a game which draws upon the strongest features of the classic arcade titles to introduce a wholly original style of game to the arcade genre, featuring:

- Over a hundred different attack patterns
- Action-packed gameplay in stunning solid 3D
- Five colourful backdrops (forget boring starfields)
- Shield, smart bomb and extra power pickups

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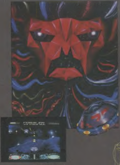
ATARI ST SCREEN SHOT

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NEWS 'N' PREVIEWS

STUFF THAT HAPPENED — STUFF THAT WILL

'16-Bit games? To you, guv, a fiver'

Hot on the heels of Mastertronic's new budget label, 16 Blitz (see the review section for their first games), the Interceptor Group now have Smash 16 to keep the popular 8-bit budget label, Players, company. Like 16 Blitz, the games are £4.99 and a mixture of re-released and original games.

Headed by the re-emergance of Eagle's Nest and Joe Blades 1 and 2, there's also Roman combat from Gladiators, Tron-like 3-D in Extensor, War Machine's platform shoot-outs, Amegas (a Break-Out variant) and Hollywood Poker (less said about that, the better!).

And for budding Robin Candys, there's even a drum machine program, Drum Studio, for the Amiga that lets you compose drum patterns using 20 sampled sounds. Smash 16 think of everything, don't they?

'Ho ho ho, readers. It's me, Santa here. Don't I look tacky this year? I'd be more convincing if I'd tied a V-neck jumper around my chin. And this tinsel's cheaper than Woolies'. But at least I've got a trendy Batman buckle. Anyway, if you've been to the Commodore Computer Christmas Show, you'll have met me IN-PERSON!! Lucky you, eh?'

Alternative sweep stake

It had to be done. Yes it's true, there is to be a Sooty and Sweep game from Welsh budget software house, Alternative.

Apparently, the Sooty TV show is the longest running TV series in the world — not bad for two glove puppets and a Richard Branson lookalike! Matthew Corbett and the two lovable rogues will be back on our screens again this autumn with a new series and a super-fun Christmas Special. Like Postman Pat, the game will have two levels of difficulty — for children and parents —, and features an accurate rendition of the catchy TV theme music.

Playing either Sooty, Sweep or both, you must collect all of Sweep's bones from about the house before Matthew gets back (Sweep's an untidy little rascal, isn't he?!). Can the furry friends tidy up the shack before Mat gets back from the boozer? Or will the yellow and grey dusters trash the place and flee to Australia. You can find out (and even help) for only £2.99 (8-bit only).

NEW YEAR DELIGHTS
THE TOP GAMES WE'RE PLAYING AT THE MOMENT

1
KICK OFF
(Anco) all formats

2
NORTH AND SOUTH
(Infogrames) Amiga/ST

3
HARD DRIVIN'
(Domark) all formats

4
GHOULS 'N' GHOSTS
(US Gold) all formats

5
SIM CITY
(Infogrames) Amiga/ST/PC

6
WONDER BOY III: MONSTERLAIR
(Hudson Soft) PC Engine

7
POWER DRIFT
(Activision) all formats

8
BATMAN
(Ocean) all formats

9
TOOBIN'
(Domark) all formats

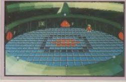
10
BLUE ANGEL 69
(ReLine) Amiga
(We've seen everybody playing number ten, but no-one will actually admit to liking it!)

Vaux

There seems to be somewhat of a French software invasion this year — and by the look of things recently, it's not a bad thing either. Imported into the UK by The Software Business, Hurikan Software's first release, Vaux, is set for release on Atari ST and Amiga soon (£24.95).

Hurikan Software was formed by two directors of a top French ad agency earlier this year. They immediately recruited programmer Tony Cooper (of 16-bit Cybernoid fame) for their first game. So it'll be interesting to see if Tony can come up with something original and up to the standards of the superb Cybernoid.

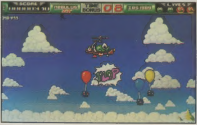
In true Elite style, Vaux is described as an interplanetary space trading game. There are six planetoids to find and explore, each one with its own special environment producing individual products. While planet-hopping in a fully armoured space cruiser you will encounter other traders and police. Both do not react kindly to hostile activity. Just as well you've 88 weapons to chose from!



Nebulus 2

Claimed by some to be the most original game of 1987, Nebulus was certainly one of the most addictive and consistently well-converted programs of that year. And now the lovable (eeurrgh!) Pogo is back — and this time he's brought his helicopter. Although still very much in the development stages, Nebulus 2 promises the same revolving towers as seen in the original, plus a flying bonus stage — similar to the submarine one in the first we suspect. There's 16 towers of action, slides, ladders, moving platforms, doors and ropes. Plus much, much more.

John Phillips, author of the prequel, is working in collaboration with Infernal Byte Systems to release Nebulus 2 for May 1990. Only planned for the Amiga and Atari ST at the moment, although we can't see why it shouldn't be as successful on the Spectrum, Amstrad and Commodore 64. Come on, Hewson, don't ignore the market which supported you for all those years!



Starflight

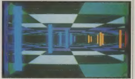
Previously only seen on the IBM PC, Starflight, the galactic space trading game, is set to appear on the Amiga, Atari ST (£24.99) and C64 (£14.99 disk only) before the end of the year. Described by Electronic Arts as a fantasy roleplaying game, you can be assured that it's a lot more exciting than it sounds.

The galaxy within which you exist consists of 270 star systems and 800 planets. There are an amazing 1.9 million unique locations on each planet, and another 1.5 million within the galaxy as a whole — it's a BIG game.

At the helm of an interstellar spaceship, you must control six hand-picked crew and with the help of your onboard Starmap navigation system, command the ship through the galaxy in search of new planets.

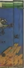
Each planet colonised will gain you intergalactic recognition, as well as extra artifacts; minerals; the secrets of alien races; and, ultimately, money.

Despite the high armoury of your ship, you are advised that it is better to communicate with your fellow man than immediately blow him apart. Only you can tip the balance between global warfare or colonisation.



Herakles

Adventures, adventurers, doncha just love 'em both. Let's hope so, cos the number of type 'n' treks available for 16-bit computers has been increasing at a hell of a rate recently — and we're not just talking about US imports. One British company dedicated to producing top-quality 16-bit adventures is Gainstar. Using the well-tried and tested formula of setting the adventure in a

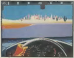


mythical world (Ancient Greece — filled with gods), Gainstar have opened up a whole new era in which the intrepid adventurer can travel.

As Herakles, son of Zeus, you must explore your land in search of 12 pieces of a broken tablet. When together, this tablet will restore power to the gods of the land and end the tyrannical reign of evil.

Herakles will be available in January on Amiga, PC and Atari ST at £24.99.

Highway Patrol II



Infogrames must be contenders for foreign software house of the year award — with such hits as North & South, Sim City, Teenage Queen and Kult, the Parisians have become a major force in the British marketplace. And with a bevy of new releases this month, times seem rosy for the Nineties.

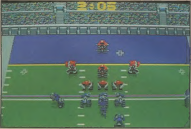
Their latest release to be announced is the driving simulation, Highway Patrol II. Very much in the mould of Taito's Chase HQ, Patrol II mixes fast arcade action with strategy as you must decide which one of the many gangsters to go after next. Available soon on the Atari ST, Amiga and PC for £19.99.

Jumping Jack Son

Named after the old Rolling Stones classic song, Infogrames' Jumping Jack Son is a strange little platform game in which you must collect various records to be placed on turntables. Sounds like gripping stuff. A great soundtrack is promised. (Don't expect a Spectrum version then.)

Cyberball

As software companies look back on their achievements over the past year, Domark is one producer who can hold its head high in the knowledge that they've improved the quantity AND quality of their product. And they're not resting on their laurels for next year, either.



The Tengen licence has proved their most popular acquisition of 1989 — spawning such coin-op conversions as Hard Drivin', APB, Dragon Spirit and Xybots. The new year promises even better and bigger games from the Domark/Tengen deal.

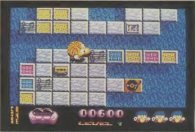
To be available in January is Cyberball — a futuristic American football-type game. And continuing Domark's policy to support as many computers as possible, it'll be available on Spectrum, Amstrad, C64, Amiga, ST and PC.

Set in the Twenties — the two thousand and twenties — Cyberball brings to mind Speedball, as a fieldful of players collide and smash into each other in the hope of at least sending each other to the hospital, at most scoring a touchdown. But your players aren't the average Dan Marinos, these guys give a whole new meaning to the word Fridge!

Ever since 2015 there have been cybernetic players on the field — it was just two years ago that Dallas put out the first all-robot line-up and smashed the Raiders 82-24. The challenge was then on to build to most aggressive and effective robot possible. That time is near and it is only the head coaches that set the teams apart. Choosing the right team can literally mean the choice between life and death — for the robots, that is!

All this player progression has not passed the NFL by, though. A few new rules have been implemented since the TV Replay Official in 1988. The ball is made up of 360 pounds of steel and highly explosive material, and measures a whopping three feet in diameter. But the players have grown to about 20 feet tall and eight feet wide — costing about $1,250,000.

What will Michael Grade have to say about all this!



DIE HARD

Activision

Suitably for this seasonal issue, *Die Hard*, like the film it portrays, is set at the Nakatomi Corporation's Christmas party, high in their skyscraper headquarters. The staff are all enjoying themselves when the party takes a dramatic turn for the worst. Armed terrorists storm the building and sieze control, sealing it off from the outside world. The partygoers are now trapped and in danger.

However, the terrorists aren't quite what they seem. Masterminded by Hans Gruber, their intention is to break into the main vault and steal the $600 million in negotiable bonds inside it. But it won't be *that* easy: John McClane, an off-duty cop played by Bruce Willis in the movie, is loose somewhere in the building. His wife is amongst those being held and he'll stop at nothing to free the hostages.

As the game begins, McClane is standing in a 32nd floor bathroom and has to reach the 40th where the hostages and vaults are located. He has 20 minutes before the main vault is breached, giving the terrorists the bonds and making the hostages expendable.

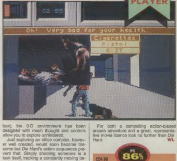
The McClane sprite is viewed from behind, rooms and corridors spreading out in filled 3-D as extensive keyboard or joystick controls guide him. He can rotate through 90 or 180 degrees, sidestep and walk forwards or backwards, and so these manoeuvres don't result in McClane becoming lost, a map of the floor can be called up by using a special wall panel. Progress is sometimes hindered by security systems but they're easily deactivated using the manual's codes.

Sooner or later, McClane will meet a terrorist, at which point he has two courses of action — three if you include running away. As a tough cop he's skilled at unarmed combat so can attack with a forward kick, punch or roundhouse kick, while preserving his own health by ducking, blocking or forward-rolling out of a tight situation. When the terrorist is armed it's wiser to use the handgun, which still allows evasive tactics.

A killed terrorist can be searched for items that often prove to be useful later. Electric cord, First Aid kit, walkie-talkie and a screwdriver are just some of them, but, as ammo is limited, replacement guns are most useful. Ten items can be carried whilst two others are used, shown in boxes at the bottom of screen.

Other displays show McClane's health level, time elapsed, outer vaults breached and, if the walkie-talkie's been found, messages from the terrorists. But just because he knows what they're up to doesn't make his mission easy.

Maze games have been around since the beginning of the games industry but none have been quite so effective as *Die Hard*. Although a significant proportion of its appeal lies in its clever graphics (see PC box), the 3-D environment has been designed with much thought and controls allow you to explore unhindered.



Just exploring an office complex, however well created, would soon become tiresome but *Die Hard*'s action sequences prevent that. Simply shooting someone is a task itself, tracking a constantly moving terrorist with a cursor while dodging *his* attacks being far from the brainless gameplay of most shoot-out games. And even without firearms there's plenty of activity, offensive and defensive unarmed moves needing to be carefully combined to knockout an opponent at minimal loss to personal health.

All these things would be great in themselves but when they're combined with the discovery and use of objects, adventure-style, and digitised stills from the film to enhance already high presentation, you're looking at a very professional, playable product. Gameplay is surprisingly deep considering *Die Hard* is an action game and completing it is a major challenge, especially under a time limit — if you survive long enough, you'll find 20 minutes pass very quickly.

For both a compelling action-biased arcade adventure and a great, representative movie licence look no further than *Die Hard*. **WL**

PC 86%

£24.99

Loading begins with digitised pictures which, like those that appear in the game itself, are a touch on the grainy side but set the scene well. The McClane sprite appears to be digitised, too, looking remarkably like Bruce Willis. His animation is excellent, highly realistic in the main but a little spoiled by few frames on some moves, and when turning his strange leg movements make him appear drunk! Terrorists aren't quite as well done but are recognisable from the movie. The 3-D movement of corridors is very well done. Even on a slow PC it's smooth, reasonably fast and quite believable. On a faster machine it's very impressive and makes the game smoother to play and realistic to look at. Sound is an inevitable letdown, minimalistic music and harsh effects, and keyboard control is cumbersome. Die Hard's only real failing, though, is its excessive and slothful loading but when the game's this good it's well worth being patient.

OTHER FORMATS

Commodore 64 (£14.99, disk only) in January, at which time the PC version will be readily available in the UK.

You are Captain Kirk!

You are Captain Kirk, the Enterprise is yours and your mission [illegible] off three intergalactic ambassadors on a safe planet, without starting a [illegible] You can interact freely with your crew - Spock, Scotty and [illegible] usual team are there, but you are pitted against the remorseless aggression of Klaa and the Klingons, and you have to escape from the deadly Barrier Zone.

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Screen shots from various systems.

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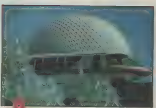
Snow White and the



On 30 May 1967 the bulldozers moved in to begin construction on the 27,400 acres of land that had been designated the Reedy Creek Improvement District by the United States government of Central Florida.

The Reedy Creek Improvement District was eventually to become one of the most impressive, if unorthodox, New Towns anywhere in the world. A new town which would introduce many innovations in the fields of transportation, architecture and construction, energy generation and conservation, agriculture, and communications. A new town which would receive countless awards, and be visited by over 25 million visitors every year.

Why haven't you heard of it? Well, you probably have.

The Reedy Creek Improvement District is more popularly known as Walt Disney World.

After Walt Disney opened California's Disneyland in 1955, he began to plan another project — Disney World. If people could spend a day at Disneyland, he reasoned, why shouldn't they be able to stay for a few days? Or a week?

Disney managed to acquire 27,400 acres of Central Florida — an area roughly the size of Paris — before word finally leaked out in late 1965 and land prices skyrocketed. Disney World was designed as a complete holiday resort. Similar to Disneyland, it has the Magic Kingdom theme park, but the first phase of the project also had hotels, campgrounds, golf courses, tennis, water sports, beaches and shopping. However, Walt Disney's most ambitious plans for his Florida property revolved around EPCOT — the Experimental Prototype Community Of Tomorrow.

EPCOT was supposed to be an actual city with full-time residents and facilities common to any city: education, public transport, housing and so on. The major purposes of EPCOT, however, was to find solutions to the problems facing the cities of the world. It was to act as an 'urban laboratory' where new technology could be tested before being introduced on a large scale.

Man with a vision

Walt Disney died in 1966, and the EPCOT that is now included within Walt Disney World is not the EPCOT that he envisaged. However, the entire 43 square miles of Walt Disney World comes pretty close to what he had intended. It is a community of roughly 30,000 residents. The only difference between Disney World and Walt's original plan for EPCOT is that the residents only stay for a few days.

When you walk around Disney World, you are actually on the first floor. Most of the built-up areas are placed on top of a network of utility corridors — utilidors — that criss-cross their way under the theme parks, carrying vital services such as electricity, telephone lines (Disney World has its own telephone system, the first in the US to be installed using only fibre-optic cabling), and water. They also provide a means for staff to get around without destroying the fantasy atmosphere above ground.

The pipes also carry garbage away from the guest areas. There are no bin vans in Disney World! Litter is collected from ground level and dumped into special intakes to be fired along the underground pipes to Disney World's own garbage disposal plant. The rubbish is then compacted into bricks and transported to a landfill site. All maintenance to the services is carried out underground, away from the sight of visitors. It also means that there's never any roadworks to clog the streets and disrupt the traffic.

Green from the start

Right from the start, Disney World was planned with a view to preserving the environment. The swampland which Disney World is built on is a haven for wildlife, and a sizeable proportion of the land has been set aside as a conservation area, and will never be built on. Development is designed around existing features of the landscape — a particularly old tree will be built around, instead of felled.

Many drainage canals are needed because of Florida's high water table. But instead of cutting through the landscape in straight lines, as is common in Florida, the canals in Disney World follow natural contours, snaking through the swamp just like natural rivers.

Disney has found a unique solution to the problem of sewage processing — flowers. The nasty stuff is pumped to Disney World's Waste Water Treatment Plant, where it is siphoned into pools. On the surface of these pools grow water hyacinths. These plants used to be thought of as nothing but hassle, as they multiply at a terrific rate and get caught in boat propellors. One day, though, someone discovered that the water hyacinth acts as a form of water filter, taking in impurities through its roots and releasing oxygen into the bargain. Water hyacinths actually thrive on raw sewage and remove over 90% of impurities from the water.

The entire process depends only on the sun to provide its energy, and since the hyacinths reproduce so quickly, the filtration system creates its own inexhaustible supply of new filters. When the plants have taken in as much sewage as they can, they are removed from the pools and used for compost, animal food, and the production of methane gas. So one day you may be able to heat your house on...

Over 30 million passengers have been carried on Disney People Movers, with not one injury caused by system perfomance.

Pictures: © 1989, The Walt Disney Co.

e 30,000 dwa

by Richard Henderson

er... sewage.

The remaining water, though greatly cleaned up, is still unfit to be recycled for drinking, but it's not wasted. The water is sprayed over the Tree Farm. This 145-acre site produces trees and plants for use in the landscaping of Disney World attractions. The trees remove pratically all of the remaining impurities from the water before returning it to the water table. Makes you wonder why we insist on dumping our crap into the sea, to have it washed up on our beaches a few days later.

Achieving the impossible

Disney World seems to have achieved the impossible — they have developed a public transportation that is pleasant (and even fun) to travel on. The forms of transportation are many, ranging from submarine (Disney World has the fifth largest submarine fleet in the world) to spaceship, but the most innovative forms of transport are slightly more functional. The most widely used of Disney World's transportation system is the monorail. Disney's monorail system has carried more than 500 million passengers since the World opened its gates to the other world in 1971. An average of 80,000 passengers per day use the system, which uses only a quarter of the power of cars and has well over 99% reliability. Of the amazing EPCOT project, Dick Nunis, President of Walt Disney Attractions, says Walt Disney would be thrilled by this project which helps to fulfil his vision that Walt Disney World would become an Experimental Protoype Community Of Tomorrow by demonstrating the advances made available to the cities of the future like the monorail system.

The city of Miami has already introduced a monorail system in its city centre which whizzes travellers around far above the traffic below, and is a good deal more pleasant that being microwaved to death under the hot Florida sun in slow-moving traffic.

Another Disney-designed innovation which has been adopted for use in the outside world is the WEDway PeopleMover (WED, an acronym for Walter Elias Disney is the company which develops new technology for the Disney parks). This driverless, pollution-free transportation system is quaintly described by Disney as a 'horizontal elevator'.

The PeopleMover is powered by linear induction motors embedded in the track which the vehicle travels along. These motors generate a magnetic field which propels the cars along. As with the monorail, energy efficiency is high. The PeopleMover is only applied to an induction motor when a car is directly over it.

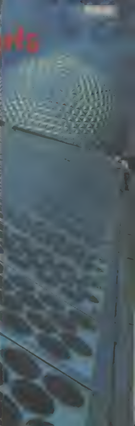
A Disney PeopleMover system was introduced in Houston International Airport in 1981, where it has since operated 22 hours a day, 365 days a year with virtually 100% reliability. Over 30 million passengers have been carried on Disney PeopleMovers, with not one injury caused by system performance.

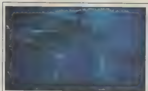
Even though Disney World has an excellent road system which puts our motorways to shame, visitors are encouraged to park their cars and use Disney's mass transit systems. All corners of Disney World are connected by a carefully-controlled network of monorails, buses and watercraft. The fact that most people do leave their cars says a lot for the way the transportation network is managed.

Wherever possible, pollution-free vehicles are used. PeopleMovers and Monorails use electricity instead of petrol, and a large proportion of Disney World's service and utility vehicles run on electric motors. Also, as part of an experimental project, a number of buses have been converted to electricity. Research into electrical transport is very important for the United States at the moment. Southern California is to ban all petrol-burning engines inside 20 years, so alternatives must be found, or the population may have to chug around in C5s in the not-too-distant future!

Power to the people

Energy conservation is likely to be very important in any city of the future, and Disney World is very geared up to this idea. The Walt Disney World Administration Building is entirely heated and cooled by solar energy, and the





Restaurant reservations can be made by talking to an actual human person via a videophone facility.

Universe of Energy pavilion (an attraction which presents the history of current energy sources and examines alternatives for the future) has an array of 80,000 solar cells on its roof. This is the largest privately-funded solar installation in the world, and the power it generates is used to drive the 'travelling theatre cars' which transport guests around the inside ■ the building.

Disney World's Central Energy Plant produces the power for the 43-square-mile property. Waste from the generators is used ■ produce hot and chilled water by means of absorption chillers. Also in operation is an experimental Fuel Cell Power Plant. Running on natural gas, the fuel c■ produces less than a tenth the pollution of the most efficient conventional fossil fuel power plant, and converts ■ whopping 80% ■ the fuel's energy into useful power compared with the measly 30% most generators can manage.

Some of the gas for the fuel cell comes from the sewage plant. Harvested water hyacinths are fed into a gruesome-sounding device called an anaerobic digestor. The hyacinths are broken down by bacteria which produce methane gas.

As well as using energy more efficiently, less energy is wasted in everyday usage. The Disney World central computer runs an Energy Management and Control System program which automatically shuts off all unnecessary lighting and air conditioning throughout Disney World.

The Land Pavilion is one ■ Disney World's largest attractions, and is dedicated to exploring new and more efficient agricultural methods: an area ■ major concern in the world today especially in developing countries. ■ is the world's largest display of food and fibre crops under one roof.

Disney scientists are currently working with NASA, testing new ways to sustain life in space. Visitors can see crops such as lettuces being grown under zero gravity in revolving drums, without any soil! Another project ■ engaged in synthesising a lunar soil simulant ■ research ways in which ■ lunar colony might be supported.

More down to earth projects include research into pest control using natural pesticides and intercropping, a technique involving the placing ■ pest-repelling plants alongside or even within the main crop. A Plant Biotech Lab was opened in 1988 which aims to develop techniques which will improve crop yields, make crops resistant to drought, and improve nutritional value, flavour, appearance and shelf life. And most strangely a type of bean which can be used ■ produce petrol.

Another crop being grown on the Land ■ fish! Scientists are studying the effects of overhead lighting on fish. In some cases, the growth process is dramatically accelerated.

None of the crops grown ■ the Land are wasted. Surplus produce ■ used in Disney World's many dozens ■ restaurants, where the choice ■ dining ranges from ■ highly exclusive six-course candlelite dinner in a restaurant with only 12 tables to that rarely nutritious (and delicious) ■ast food. Fish from the Living Seas Pavilion is used in the same way.

Planning for the future

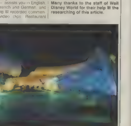
The World Key Information Service exists for those who are awed by the sheer size ■ DisneyWorld. It offers help and advice to visitors by means of an interactive videodisk system which is accessed via a touch screen. Your WorldKey host – a glowing, animated square called Bip – assists you in English, Spanish, French and German, and with the help ■ recorded commentary and video clips. Restaurant reservations ca■ also be made, by talking to an actual human person via ■ videophone facility.

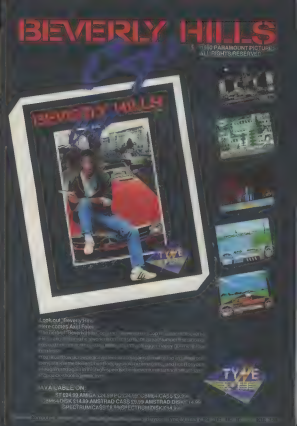
A visit to Disney World is the best form ■ education. You're so busy having fun that you don't realise how much you're learning. Behind the mouse ears lies ■ serious purpose. Disney ■ trying to find ways to make life not just better, but perhaps even possible in the future. Before ■ died, Walt Disney said 'There's enough land here to hold all the ideas and plans we could possibly imagine.' As yet, they haven't run out of land or ideas.

Many thanks to the staff of Walt Disney World for their help ■ the researching of this article.

Disney World is working to improve the rest of the world, and you can help! The place is full of demonstrations of new technology, and feedback from visitors ■ highly valued. Touch screens are employed again as a means of collecting visitors' opinions on such subjects as education, energy and the environment. The results of these electronic questionnaires are monitored by many agencies, including the US Government. How much weight they place on the results is unclear, but since 30,000 visitors is considered a quiet day at Disney World, they must be hard to ignore.

The EPCOT is a similar application of this idea. Participants in the poll sit in a theatre, where they are asked questions on a given topic which they answer by means of a row of buttons on the seat armrests. The audience responses can instantly be gauged from the results displayed on a large screen at the front of the theatre. The questions will be the same each day for a month, and the totalled results are widely published.





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Look out, Beverly Hills!
Here comes Axel Foley!

The hero of "Beverly Hills Cop" and "Beverly Hills Cop II" is back in Beverly Hills and this time he's working on a case that's a real stumper. He's going to stop the crime of the year [illegible] an army of trigger-happy gunmen stop him first.

You'll roar down crowded city streets, race against time to stop a daring robbery, stalk armed killers, hunt for clues to a bizarre crime, and fight for your life again and again in this high-speed action adventure starring the fast-talking, quick-shooting detective.

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CBM64 DISK £14.99 AMSTRAD CASS £9.99 AMSTRAD DISK £14.99
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Computer [illegible] Blaydon Tyne & Wear NE21 4TF UK [illegible]

CABAL
CABAL
AMSTRAD
SPECTRUM
COMMODORE
£9.99
ocean

The Games machine

TOP SCORE

20 ▣ F-29 RETALIATOR

Ocean come up with the goods yet again. Be a scourge of the skies in an F-29 or F-22, flying over four warzones in any one of many missions. Combining the realism of Falcon with the depth of F-16 Combat Pilot, F-29 adds ideas of its own to form one of the best flight simulators yet.

26 ▣ SIM CITY

Ever driven around Milton Keynes or Telford and wished the town planner had been drowned at birth? Now you can get your own back by subjecting computer people to your horrendous designs as you strive to become a popular mayor. A compelling Infogrames 16-bit strategy game with surprisingly wide appeal.

TOP SCORE

10 ▣ DIE HARD

The game of the film of the book has arrived all the way from the States. Check out the EXCLUSIVE stop press review now.

29 ▣ RETROGRADE

More aliens have been busy invading and now have their eyes on your home planet. To stop them you have to neutralise the alien bunker which is hidden way underground. Use money to obtain weapons at the local shops. Thalamus yet again provide a innovative and challenging shoot-'em-up.

24 ▣ SUPER WONDER BOY

In his second adventure the cheeky little chappie has to defeat the Meka dragon at the enter of Monsterland. There's loads of cash around to be spent at the neighbourhood bonus outlets. Out-and-out fun platform action from Activision.

28 ▣ GALAXY FORCE II

Like Afterburner, a 'sequel' to the original Galaxy Force coin-op soon appeared in the arcades but which bore little differences. Still, who's complaining when Activision have managed to recreate the speedy 3-D shoot-'em-up to 16-bits with commendable accuracy.

22 ▣ GHOULS 'N' GHOSTS

Many a werewolf-creating moon has passed since Arthur the knight's first goblin-maiming jaunt but know he faces a journey bigger, better and tougher than ever before. Monsters are more varied and unusual, and platform networks are more complex. However the gameplay is just as fun and addictive as it ever was.

25 ▣ HARD DRIVIN'

The long-awaited filled vector racin' game is finally on computer. It's more than the usual high speed chase though, as tracks are littered with all manner stunt racin' ramps, includin' the famous loop. Hold onto your hats, joysticks and goggles as you experience the stomach-churnin' journey of a lifetime.

35 ▣ GHOSTBUSTERS II

Who ya [illegible] I ain't [illegible] Hmm, the old Ghostbusters quotes are difficult to avoid. And so the game is the sequel: many of the sprites are, too, as you swing down a hole, steer the Statue of Liberty and attempt to trap a 17th Century power-crazed madman! But it's all done in the best possible Star-Playing taste.

28 ▣ NINJA WARRIORS

As with the highly playable shoot-'em-up Silkworm, The Sales Curve have produced an amazingly accurate conversion of the coin-op – Amiga graphics identical to the arcade original. A Ninja robot slays similar mechanical martial arts maniacs in brilliant beat-'em-up battles.

80+ GAMES REVIEWED

IT'S A SCORCHER THIS MONTH. WITH SUCH AN INCREASE IN GAMES REVIEWS THE REVIEW SECTION HAS HAD TO BE SPLIT INTO TWO SECTIONS. PART ONE STARTS OVERLEAF AND INCLUDES THE MAIN RELEASES OF THE MONTH, WHILE PART TWO COMMENCES ON PAGE 77, AND INCLUDES SHORTER REVIEWS OF CONSOLE GAMES AND MINOR COMPUTER RELEASES. WE'VE ALSO HAD TO STICK A FEW REVIEWS ON BLACK AND WHITE PAGES, JUST TO GET THEM IN AT ALL! NORMAL COLOUR SERVICE WILL COMMENCE NEXT MONTH, WHEN WE'LL BE A BIT BETTER PREPARED! THE REVIEW COVERAGE — ESPECIALLY PC AND CONSOLE GAMES — IS TO INCREASE FROM NEXT MONTH, BE SURE NOT TO MISS OUT ON IT!

GAMES REVIEWED

AMIGA
[illegible] Magic Hammer 78
[illegible] 80
[illegible] 78
[illegible] 36
Dragon Spirit 33
[illegible] 36
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ATARI ST
[illegible] Magic Hammer 78
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[illegible] 82
[illegible] 78
[illegible] 79
[illegible] 79
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Dragon Spirit 33
[illegible] Formula One 33
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Ghostbusters II 35
Ghouls 'n' Ghosts 22
Hard Drivin' 25
Ninja Warriors 28
Power Drift 21
Snoopy 82
Speedboat Assassins 81
Super Wonder Boy 24
[illegible] 34
[illegible] 40
PC
[illegible] 14
[illegible] 19
[illegible] 21
[illegible] 24
COMMODORE 64
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Alex Kidd: High-Tech World 78
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[illegible] Dragon's Trap 26
PC ENGINE
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Honey Sky 81
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[illegible] 83
Rock-On 79
[illegible] II — Fantasm Soldier 82
Wonder Boy III — Monster Lair 26
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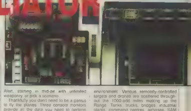
F-29 RETALIATOR

Ocean



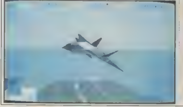
The Advanced Technical Fighter is soon to be decided by ■ competition between Lockheed and Northrop prototypes. Ocean have backed the Lockheed F-22, which has yet to fly! But the real future ■ aircraft lies with forward-swept wings and the Grumman F-29, whose 'impossible wings' were perfected too late for the ATF design but soon enough for Ocean to incorporate into this simulator.

Now jump forward ■ couple of decades into the early 21st century, when both planes are in service. For reasons which are obscure, the world has plunged into World War III. As yet no-one's gone 'nuclear', and the skill of conventional forces in containing the conflict ■ prevent doomsday is crucial.

Retaliator begins with you enrolling as an Air Force pilot ■ any of five ranks (1st Lieutenant up to Colonel). Once cleared for pilot status by a security routine, your military career can begin by selecting an F-22 or F 29, the craft you must stick with under your selected identity. You can then go direct into war with the arcade-style Zulu Alert, starting in mid-air with unlimited weaponry, or pick a scenario.

Thankfully you don't need to be a genius to fly the planes. Three console monitors provide all the data you need to perform your mission: selecting through the displays brings up an amazing array of radars, indicators and moving maps. External views are also available ■ you to admire yourself from, as is a view from a satellite. Autopilot ■ provided, with electronic countermeasures (ECMs which jams radar), plus chaff and flares (to distract enemy missiles).

The American Test Range is your best bet if you want ■ get the feel ■ your new environment. Various remotely-controlled targets and drones are scattered throughout the 1000-odd miles making up the Range. Tanks, trucks, bridges, industrial plants, command centres, airbases, SAM sites and more provide target fodder for ground attacks while drone MIG-29 Fulcrums practice patrols around the Range skies, eager for an air-to-air to take them out.



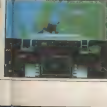
There are five types of air-to-air missile to choose from, and four types of air-to-surface missile, all highly advanced and 'smart' with it. Load up with whatever weapon you want and use them to the full on the test range. ■ the warzones you may well experience weapon shortages, so this may be the best chance you get to play around with AGM-10H Cruise Missiles, Back-Winders, Conventional Stand Off Weapons and the rest.

In the 21st Century the future ■ air power will be a mixture of superlative fighter agility and stealth tactics which ■ where the ATF fits right in. Shut down ■ the radars and the aircraft enters Stealth mode, vital for passing through defence zones crammed full of surface-to-air missiles (SAMs) and heavy radar coverage. For high speed, high level flights kick ■ the Supercruise to thrust up to 100%. For your missions the two modes are as important as the save/load position feature.

To enter ■ mission select the theatre of conflict from the main option screen. The three warzones are ■ hot spots for the US in the next 20 years and you're ■ the thick of it. Choose from the Middle East (where

friendly nations engage enemy ground forces on two fronts), the Pacific Solomos islands (a USA colony rich in oil deposits but under threat from enemy naval attack and invasion) and The Big One – conventional war in Central Europe. With 9000 tanks and three million soldiers to hand the enemy isn't going into this half-heartedly!

Logically, you can't tackle a mission that theoretically occured towards the end of the war so only by completing missions and surviving the air war do more missions come to light (in the form of War Updates). For instance, in the Pacific warzone the first few missions aren't too demanding at all (down a few MiGs, hit a small enemy oil depot and so on) but with time the war situation changes, new War Updates appear, and ever harder different missions crop up (ranging from crippling a Super Tanker to defending the New Jersey from all out attack or even taking on an Aircraft Carrier!)

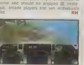


Ocean have always been known for their fun, arcade-style games but haven't come with a proper flight sim until now. And what a way to start! True, it has got an arcade option, where engines, landing, radar etc can be forgotten about in favour of out-and-out fun combat but even that is of a higher quality than most first-person flying games.

Although you can spend many hours on the arcade section and admiring the graphics on the Test Range, F-29's depth and realism can only be appreciated by tackling missions. Those in the Pacific are quite straightforward and gradually ease you into the more difficult and complex missions of the Middle East. F-29 then becomes a lot more challenging and it will be a long time before you're experienced enough to tackle the fronts in Central Europe – but it'll be satisfying when you are.

First class presentation (aided by a highly informative manual), realistic aircraft response, four completely different warzones, countless missions and many, many enemies all add up to make F-29 Retaliator a fantastic product. It puts all other home computer flight simulators to shame and should be enjoyed by strategists, arcade players and sim enthusiasts alike.

RH



£24.99

Graphics are beautifully detailed, fast-moving polygons thoughtfully coloured to form realistic vehicles and immensely varied ground detail, the sandy beaches and shallows of the Pacific islands being particularly attractive and authentic. This and the smooth, fast 3-D effect make F-29 the best-looking flight sim around. The soundtrack is a great rock piece plus some amazing sampled effects, from gunshots to the groan of the pilot during high-G turns!

OTHER FORMATS

Only the ST is planned at present, and that for release in the New Year.

VERSION UPDATES

ATARI ST • AMSTRAD CPC

Power Drift

ACTIVISION • £19.99/£9.99, £14.99
Commodore 64 92%, Amiga 90% – TGM025

Although it has the high presentation and colourful arcade look of the Amiga, the ST uses fewer colours, less detail and moves slower. Sound effects are weaker and samples a touch distorted, but overall audio is good. The driver portraits on the Amstrad selection screen scroll horizontally. They're much larger than on other versions so only five can fit onscreen at once. Unfortunately, the portraits, like the poorly animated cars, jerky road and just about everything in the game, are gaudy and very blocky. The music's quite good but effects are just a dull roar and the occasional ping.

Machine update Atari ST 84%
Amstrad 45%

ATARI ST •

PC Fiendish Freddy's Big Top O' Fun

MINDSCAPE £29.99
Amiga 89% TGM022

Graphics have the same brilliant cartoon look and movement, which like the Amiga lacks animation frames in places. Sound is still as jolly as the Amiga's. PC owners will also have to juggle between five disks but with less impressive results. There have been some strange choices of colouration in some places and there's less graphic detail than in the other two versions. On sluggish PCs (less than 8Mhz) everything moves very slowly and jerkily, damaging look, feel and playability. Owners of standard Amstrad machines should perhaps steer clear of an otherwise fun multi-event, multi-player game.

Machine update Atari ST 88%
PC 85%

PC ENGINE

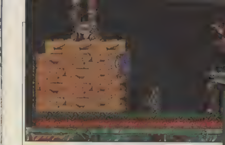
Altered Beast

SEGA/NEC AVENUE £39.95 CD-ROM
Amiga 69%, Atari ST 70%, Commodore 64 74%
TGM025

No nasty disks, tapes, cartridges or ROM cards for the PC Engine incarnation of Altered Beast. Only CD-ROM owners can play it, but they've nothing to brag about!

Backgrounds are adequate (if somewhat lacking in colour and detail) but sprites are deformed and often strangely coloured. Animation is weak and there's horrible sprite flicker when there's more than a few creatures onscreen. Worst of all is the disk access which interrupts the game for a number of seconds several times during each level. Sound is very weak considering this is CD-ROM – a rather ordinary tune and a few sound effects that are worse than most Engine samples. Average playability ruined by tortuous loading. Engine Altered Beast is a big disappointment. For a *real* conversion, try it on the Sega Mega Drive.

Machine update 60%



It's been three years since Arthur last lobbed a lance in the classic Ghosts 'n' Goblins, and now he's finally about to make an honest woman out of the lady he rescued – Princess Hus. But just when the lovely woman starts going down the aisle up pops a demon and spirits her away.

Being the sort of chap he is, Art isn't about to shrug his shoulders and say 'c'est la vie'. His penguin suit is swiftly swapped for armour, and a clutch of lances is promptly pocketed for the upcoming battle. The brave, not to say suicidal, adventure begins in a graveyard complete with vultures, zombies and guillotines. Being careless with these villains reduces Art to his boxer shorts. After a bit of flashing, during which you're invulnerable, another hit sends you back to the last trigger point – usually a long, long way back. This is irritating, but it's part of the game's appeal that forces you to learn the sadistic attack patterns by heart.

The second part of level one features whirling demons, which can be shot only when they're briefly not whirling, skull-spitting fires and pig-headed guardians. Beat these and it's face-to-face with a fire-breathing monster who has the key to level two.

To provide some help on your (virtually) impossible quest there are chests which can be opened by firing at them. Sometimes a magician will spring out who, if you don't shoot him first, will turn you into a helpless duck for a few seconds. But if you're lucky you'll find a weapon like mega-armour. Hold down fire when you're in this blue armour and a special weapon is activated, such as a another knight to mirror your every move, or a ray which shoots out in three directions. Alternatively there might be a normal weapon to swap for your lance, such as a fast-firing dagger, an arcing axe or a fiery torch which sets alight the ground where it lands. These weapons can also be found in sacks carried by the baddies, as well as treasure for bonus points.

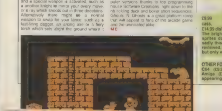
Level two takes place in a ruined city complete with bouncing metal skulls, firebats, collapsing ground and a feline end-of-level monster. The next level has Art whizzing upwards on a magical carpet, mixing horizontal and vertical-scrolling for a bigger challenge. This is the ruined tower and stopping to chat with baddies will see you crushed against the roof.

The penultimate level takes you to the skeleton caves where the bones of massive creatures make up the scenery, and the resident denizens make you feel as unwelcome as their pals in previous levels. More vertical scrolling takes you down slippery slopes to a fearsome sea monster and much, much more besides.

But the worst is saved to last, and the evil red knight's castle is one of the toughest tests around. Lethal clouds with eyes at their centre, huge bullet-spitting skulls and a seemingly endless supply of winged demons are all out to get you. Clearly this is one massive challenge, but the imagination of Capcom makes it all worthwhile. Unlike so many lesser games, the later levels are virtually new games in their own right, rather than pale rehashes of the first level with different graphics.

The original game, converted by Elite, was great, so it's good to see that US Gold have more than lived up to the high standards it set. The sheer playability of the coin-op has been transferred to all the computer versions thanks to top programming house Software Creations, right down to the rib-tickling duck and boxer short sequences. Ghouls 'N Ghosts is a great platform romp that will appeal to fans of the arcade game and the uninitiated alike.

MC



machine

STAR PLAYER

SPECTRUM 85%

£9.99 cass,
£14.99 disk

Beautifully detailed sprites and bouncy title tune blend together to create a first class conversion of a very playable coin-op. The only slight moan is that some of the sprites are a little difficult to see at times.

ATARI ST 90%

£19.99

Graphics and sonics are both up to scratch in this first 16-bit version. The sprites are small, but great attention to detail has been paid and rewards close inspection. In fact, TGM has no hesitation in recommending that you go out and buy Ghouls 'N' Ghosts now!

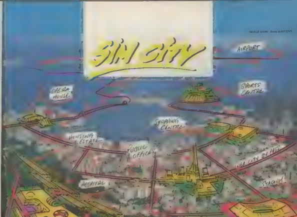
AMSTRAD 79%

£9.99 cass,
£14.99 disk

The bright, colourful, chunky Amstrad sprites do their best to entertain, but sadly this is the worst of the versions reviewed. The game is quite playable, but only with a pair of sunglasses.

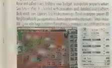
OTHER FORMATS

C64 (£9.99 cass, £14.99 disk) and Amiga (£24.99) versions should be appearing about now.



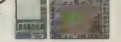
On seeing the crumbling [illegible], out-dated [illegible], [illegible] bridges of [illegible] city, how many times [illegible] "[illegible] change for a day and I'll make this [illegible] work!"
Now with Sim City, take the destiny of the world's greatest cities in hand. Or take charge of a new evolving and growing city. Become the mayor and [illegible]

Build [illegible] streets, factories, airports, a stadium, or even nuclear power plants. Organise urban transport, hire police, firemen, bulldoze entire neighbourhoods.
Raise and collect taxes, balance your budget, manipulate property values. Sim City is [illegible] with animation and detailed sound effects. Build roads, cars appear. Lay tracks, trains go. Build an airport, planes fly. Neighbourhoods [illegible]. Small suburbs grow into huge [illegible] [illegible]

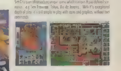


SIM CITY

What you should know about the game of the year.



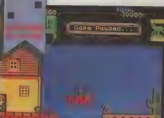
time. Every decision instantly influences the life of your town.
In a special mode, you can even cause tornadoes, floods, fires and other disasters at your whim. Save San Francisco from the great earthquake of 1906. Or save Tokyo of pollution and from his famous B-movie monster.
Sim City is an all-absorbing unique game which contains 8 pre-defined scenarios, e.g. San Francisco, Tokyo, Rio de Janeiro... With it's exceptional depth of play it's still simple to play with icons and graphics, without text commands.



Design and build the city of your dreams. Sim City gives you the keys. The rest is up to you.

NEWSWEEK Volume II Issue 20: "People playing Sim City are completely plugged into the world they create, disappearing for hours."
NEW YORK TIMES: "The model is very sophisticated, yet understandable. And just as important, it's fun too."

MAXIS INFOGRAMES



Superboy follows in Dad's tootsteps

SUPER WONDERBOY

Activision

There's a dragon on the warpath in Monsterland and there's only one cheeky chappie who can stop him. Tom-Tom, known to his friends as Wonder Boy, is just the bloke for the job.

During your quest, you will meet many allies of the firebreathing Meka dragon. The menagerie of bats, anacondas and skeletons is helped out by an assortment of Japanese half breeds. However, each one can be quickly turned into a shiny coin with a swift slash from your sword.

Coins, of course, should be picked up as they are used for purchasing extra abilities. Enter a shop and a trader will appear, offering magic potions, armour, shields, bombs and whirlwinds.

You'll need all the help you can muster to get past the guardian of each level. On the defeat of each of the 27 monsters, you receive substantial cash remuneration and the prospect of an even tougher fight to come.

Super Wonder Boy is the second game in the Wonder Boy trilogy (versions of the third are already available on PC Engine and Sega) and Activision have done themselves proud. The eponymous super-character takes his job seriously which is just as well — firebreathing dragons ain't that easy to kill you know.

MC

£9.99
cass, £14.99
disk

On the Commodore the game is colourful. However, the characters and backgrounds are of the Adventures in Legoland variety and severely spoil the presentation of a game which is, in fact, very playable.

SPECTRUM 83%

£9.99 cass

Tom-Tom is just the job on the Spectrum. Although he's simply monochrome, the backgrounds are extremely detailed and highly involving. Probably the best conversion you could expect on the Spectrum, and certainly worth a tenner of any Speccy owner's cash.

£24.99

On the ST, Super Wonder Boy is not only playable, but the graphics are the nearest to the arcade machine you're going to get. Sound is also good, with a bouncy tune playing throughout the game. On the ST, Super Wonder Boy is certainly deserving of the Star Player accolade.

OTHER FORMATS
Amiga (£24.99) and Amstrad (£9.99 cass, £14.99 disk) versions should be available now.

'It was kinda cigar shaped...'

UFO

subLogic

In UFO you pilot a *Zytar* 7654 craft, equipped with many propulsion systems and clever devices beyond our ken. The simplest of these is anti-gravity which, on Earth, just pushes the Zytar into the air, but by varying pitch, yaw and power level can make the craft hover and move in any direction.

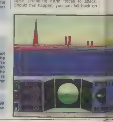
Steering is accomplished by rotational controls, which enable the Zytar to be pitched, yawed and rolled, and six individual thrusters for finer movement.

The main propulsion system is the gluon drive which enables high-speed travel and rapid changes of direction – perfect for all those impressive manoeuvres so characteristic of sighted UFOs. Yet another form of propulsion is the graviton which attracts the Zytar to the nearest large body.

The UFO has two other motion-related systems. The motion neutraliser is, quite simply, a brake, while anti-laminar reduces friction and drag when in a planet's atmosphere, thus increasing speed and efficiency.

A pop-up menu can be used to select a destination, which, in turn, activates the navigation display. It gives distance from target, the speed at which it's being approached, heading, vertical trajectory, time (actual, elapsed, ETA and time remaining before target's reached) and round display to guide you onto the correct heading. If all this is too much, a teleport can transport the *Zytar* there instantly.

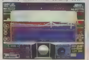
If flying around space and the Earth becomes a little tiresome there are two entertainment options. In Energy Trader, the Earth is scoured for the rare Q-energy, usually found in city buildings (huh?). The energy is detected by the illuminator device and collected using a special beam — absorb too much and the building will collapse prompting Earth forces to attack. Should this happen, you can fall back on



the transducer (a device which makes the Zytar invisible) and a defence shield, but both require a lot of energy.

To be a real mean alien and worry hundreds of innocent people try Earth Craft Chase! The Zytar has to manoeuvre close to an aircraft (preferably a commercial aeroplane) and engage the graviton to capture it.

Well, we've seen many different simulators in our time but this is the first time we've piloted a realistically designed interplanetary saucer! That certainly doesn't mean it's a superficial game, however. On the contrary, UFO is a deal more complicated and involved than most simulators but as it's such a software oddity it has the appeal of a much more easily accessible game.



Just mastering anti-gravity and rotational controls is almost as challenging as any ordinary flight sim but considering the Zytar's other capabilities, UFO has enough to keep you occupied for many hours. Energy Trader and Earth Craft Chase are highly interesting diversions that are designed to be fun and succeed.

With subLogic's scenery disks and the strong possibility of UFO spacecraft data disks in the future, UFO is an intriguing simulator with tremendous lasting interest. Worry the human race, buy it or at the very least try it.

WL

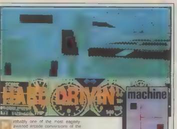
£29.99

PC 82%

The extensive collection of dials and readouts that surround the action have a rather rushed and 8-bit look: they could've been a lot neater and much more futuristic-looking. The 3-D graphics depicting the action would've benefitted from more attention, too. The UFO itself is white, red, black, blue and yellow, so with it's round, spoked design it looks much like a jovial umbrella. Still, it and the scenery are sharply defined and animated/updated with pleasing smoothness and speed (unless you've got a bog-standard PC, but even then gameplay makes up for aesthetic niggles). Sound is duff, of course, and although control response can be highly dubious it's adjustable to suit personal preference.

OTHER FORMATS

Amiga and ST versions to follow in early 1989. Expect them to be very similar to the terrific PC version.



HARD DRIVIN'

machine STAR PLAYER

Probably one of the most eagerly-awaited arcade conversions of the year Hard Drivin', due to its size and sound, is one of those machines that everyone crowds around in the arcades. Because of this, it's bound to become one of the top Christmas games. Domark's computer version has all the features and appeal of its older brother.

Choose either manual or automatic gear box and just wait for the lights to turn green. As you progress down the road you have two choices: turn right for the Stunt track, or continue cruising down the road for a swift trip around the Speed track. Both tracks must be completed within a time limit for you to qualify for the Championship Lap.

The Speed track, as you would imagine, is full of high-speed bends and long straights ending in hairpins. Corners, although not being a hazard, are the main problem. All have to be taken at an exact, high speed, with any deviation from the norm resulting in you either flying off the top of the corner or falling off the bottom. Further hassle is added by cars and lorries coming around the corner towards you – usually only in view when they hit your front fender.

For real professionals there's the more challenging Stunt course. There are three major obstacles here: the Bridge Jump, the Loop, and the gut-wrenching Bend (complete with G-forces!). Take care to read all the signs displaying maximum speeds for obstacles — unlike other games, these are NOT flexible.

Both courses will eventually be completed, but not before you've seen the terrific Replay function a few times – each time you crash! The Replay shows from a bird's eye view just where you went wrong, complete with explosion.

When qualified for the Championship Lap, you find yourself up against the Phantom Photon. This guy's just the sort of reliable and consistent driver you could do without. The Phantom Photon never crashes and hardly ever leaves the track – in fact he's enough to make you sick! You, however, are disqualified after ten seconds on the grass or after one little spill. Beat this guy around the Stunt track and your racing line, technique and style will be recorded for use by the Photon next race. Effectively challenging yourself!

Originally designed as a professional driving simulator, Hard Drivin' is now fast and furious arcade action all the way. The conversion on all formats is top-notch. All speed freaks should have a copy of Hard Drivin' in their garage.

MC

£9.99 cass.
£14.99 disk

If you were worried about the speed of the Spectrum version, forget it! This is just the sort of action-packed game you could do with on Christmas Day. So the sprites are monochromatic, who cares, this version is so playable. Binary Design and Domark have achieved the impossible. They have managed to fit a Ferrari into a Fiesta..

£19.99

Hey, you wanted the arcade game, you've got it! Go get this on the ST today. All you need now's the Euromax Turbo Pedal (see page 42)

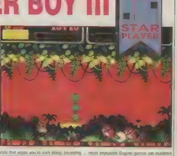
OTHER FORMATS

C64 (£9.99 cass, £12.99 disk), Amstrad (£9.99 cass, £14.99 disk), Amiga (£19.99), PC (£24.99) and Archimedes versions are all imminent.

Dragon's Lair

WONDER BOY III

Hudson Soft/Westone/Sega



STAR PLAYER

He gets around a lot, this Wonder Boy. Elsewhere, we review his second game on home computers while here we look at his third, in two separate guises: Wonder Boy III — Monster Lair on CD-ROM for the PC Engine and Wonder Boy III — The Dragon's Trap on the 8-bit Sega. Plot isn't too important and there's not much to it, but although in the same basic format, gameplay has enough difference to separate the games.

MONSTER LAIR

The lair has been previously explored by a legendary man called Bock and now Wonder Boy and his girlfriend (Wonder Girl, presumably) are out to follow in his footsteps. Each level has two sections, the first a familiar run and jump along horizontally scrolling platforms and slopes. Gorillas, snails, parrots, squid and elephants leave behind icons to enhance the capabilities of the heroes: firing swords and fruit gives extra points.

The Wonder duo are astride small dragons in the second halves of the 14 levels and again go rightward, this time facing curling patterns of creatures, all of whom have a strange tendency to throw beachballs. Again, icons are collected to increase fire-power and it's very necessary to do so when you consider the size of the end-of-level nasties (ie BIG).

Wonder Boy III is quite simply the best, most playable platform game this side of Super Mario Bros. It has a fun, free-flowing style that urges you to rush along, bounding and blasting, and this feeling is enhanced when you play the brilliant two-player game, which has the amusing feature of being able to stand on each others head!

The flying shoot-'em-up section has a fast, irresistible pace so that it's almost as playable as the platform section: the two sections combined easily make it one of the most enjoyable Engine games yet available and the two-player option makes it the best platform game for the console.

THE DRAGON'S TRAP

The Sega Wonder Boy III follows on from Super Wonder Boy and the defeat of the Meka dragon, which forms the first part of the game. Actually, make that *semi* defeat — the dying beast had enough energy to transform Wonder Boy into a lizard-man!! The only way he can turn back to normal is to find the Salamander Cross of legend, hidden by the powerful Vampire Dragon in the distant Monster Land (see, the two Wonder Boy III's had to be linked somehow!)

As Tom-Tom defeats each end-of-level dragon and gets nearer the Cross he becomes mouse-man, piranha-man, lion-man and finally hawk-man. Some of these forms bestow extra abilities such as wall-clinging, swimming and flying.

Pick-ups restore energy, give extra weapons and money. Money can be spent in hospitals, to restore life, or shops, for weaponry. The amount of equipment offered in a shop depends on the Boy's current charm: piranha- and lion-man have the most initial charm and dragon-man the least but more can be gained by collecting charm stones.

In contrast to the two previous Wonder Boy games and, indeed, the Engine Monster Lair, The Dragon's Trap has distinct arcade adventure elements amongst its familiar jumping and sword swiping.

With its multiple forms of Tom-Tom, Dragon's Trap does have some treasures to be revealed, if you have the necessary persistence. But why spoil the previous success of the simple jump and hack formula when the Engine version works so well? That's a mystery too late to resolve but one which leaves Sega owners to decide what they want from Wonder Boy. **WB**

PC ENGINE 86%

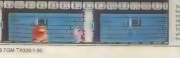
£39.95
CD-ROM

Although bright and jolly backgrounds they lack detail but scrolling is smooth and, at the end-of-level monster stage, fast. Sprites are excellent, making great use of colour and with a cute cartoon look. Spot effects, produced by the Engine itself, are merely average but the music from the CD is brilliant, a mixture of funny, dramatic and speedy pieces.

SEGA 71%

£27.95

Wonder Boy III is a very jolly looking game with some nicely shaded backgrounds overlaid with colourful cartoon-like sprites, the Boy himself being particularly well-drawn. Animation is weak on some characters but effective on others and the game only scrolls on short, CinemaScope corridors, and then with a judder, albeit a minor one. It's still one of the best looking Sega games around but do you *really* want to spend [illegible] quid on it?



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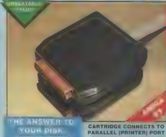

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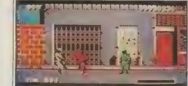
SYNCHRO

Two's bad company

NINJA WARRIORS

Virgin/The Sales Curve

The year is 1993. Thatcher's out and Bangler's in. Bangler is just the sort of evil dictator Britain can do without. He controls both the army and the criminal underworld. Subsequently, the population's in a bit of a terrible state. However, one man has grown up through the ranks of the people and is leading a revolt against the evil dictatorship. The brave young warrior is known to the people as Marc and under his direction the people are building the ultimate fighting machines, Ninja Warriors.



Two Ninja Warriors must travel the six continents, facing various government forces on their way, to finally meet Bangler in an explosive climax.

Choose either red or blue warrior (or grab a friend to help) and get cracking. The first level places you on the wartorn city streets. Watch out for the aggressive inhabitants and enemy forces as they charge at you wielding knives, grenade launchers and numerous guns. Level two occupants include dogs, hunchback ground spiders and a huge tank.

Although you can take more punishment than mere mortals, the energy bar soon finds itself near the bottom. Each level, and its obligatory guardian, must be overcome before your final confrontation with the evil Bangler.

The arcade version of Ninja Warriors has three screens. The Sales Curve have done a magnificent job in squashing all this action onto a smaller screen.
MC

£19.99

AMIGA 90%

The graphics are small but very colourful and detailed. The sound is great, with the title tune taken straight from the coin-op. A must-buy for fans of the immortal murder machines.

£9.99 cass,
£14.99 disk

C64 85%

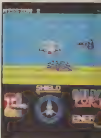
Bearing in mind the C64's limited colour and resolution, the graphics are an accurate representation of their arcade selves. Sound is mediocre and does the job.

OTHER FORMATS
Spectrum and Amstrad CPC versions (£9.99 cass, £14.99 disk) will be available in early December

£19.99

ATARI ST 90%

Graphically as impressive as the Amiga version, the ST game contains the same rip, mangle and maim fun. Once all six levels have been completed interest may wane, but it will take many hours of slaughter to reach old Bangler himself.



The Forth dimension...

GALAXY FORCE II

Activision

The Forth Empire are running riot and as a member of the Space Federation you must stop them. But this is nothing to the fact that The Empire are building the strongest fortress of all time: a base from which they will multiply and expand. You must stop them!

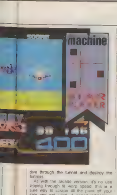
Your system, Junos, is split into five planets: Velleor, Malkland, Orthea, Ashutar and Junos itself. First choose which planet you wish to defend first, then hit the thrusters and you're off.

Your offensive weaponry consists of a laser gun and an unlimited supply of homing missiles. Each planet differs in climate, so whilst one is a lush green paradise, another is an icy hell hole or a barren wasteland.

Your mission for each planet is the same: battle your way across the surface and then

£24.99

Galaxy Force is a fast and furious blast-'em-up on the ST. The sprites are smooth and colourful, and gameplay very involving. However, whilst it contains the heart of the coin-op (including the great soundtrack), it lacks the guts provided by the hydraulics.



dive through the tunnel and destroy the fortress.

As with the arcade version, it's no use zipping through at warp speed, this is a sure way to scrape all the paint off your ship and get killed. A speed indicator is thoughtfully provided and its use is recommended. Alongside it are indicators for shield power and energy level (which can be replenished).

Galaxy Force is one of the best hydraulic arcade games around. Unlike Afterburner, Activision have done a terrific job in transferring speed and playability onto the home computer.
MC

SPECTRUM 78%

£9.99 cass

The Spectrum version is fast but sadly the chequered patterns on the planet's surface confuse the matter. Sound though is, like the ST, a great rendition of the arcade dance track.

AMIGA 78%

£24.99

Very similar to the ST: bright and bold, sprites often vague in the distance but generally well designed. Tunnels approach jerkily but with reasonable speed so the illusion of depth is quite effective. The music is weak (for the Amiga) but effects are reasonable.

OTHER FORMATS
The C64 and Amstrad (both £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk) versions should be good for a larf, and with you now.

Keep bustin'

RETROGRADE

Thalamus

The Thwok system is under attack. Seven vile races have already invaded seven of its planets. The eighth and final planet is Choom, you're home world, and you're fighting for its existence. Climbing into your armoured battle suit, complete with jet pack, you start your life-saving, planet-preserving mission.

To prevent eternal misery, you must destroy the alien nerve centres buried deep underground. Obviously, a planetbuster is required! Aliens walking on the horizontally scrolling surface of the planet carry these: a few quick blasts to kill them and it's yours. Also on the planet surface are crystals (the local currency). Using your money, prime up your buster at the local shop and you're in action.

Shops contain a large range of weaponry. The Flying Weapons section is the largest, with 12 devices available. Weapons can be installed on one of [illegible] points around you, but there's a limit of nine power points so freedom is limited. Most weapons can be upgraded to higher power levels but earlier planets lack the supplies to let you do this.

There are also five different strengths of powerfist available from their own menu, again restricted on earlier levels. All types of weapon and their upgrades can be sold but you'll only get a fraction of what you paid for them.

With the planetbuster primed an opened bunker has to be found, where the game switches to vertical scrolling. Weaponry reduced to a powerfist, you have to negotiate the platforms and reach the bottom of the bunker to destroy a resilient alien. Transported to the surface, the process is repeated until all bunkers have been neutralised and the aliens' control is lost.

Getting to the next planet is far from easy. As you make your way through space a massive creature attacks. In this section of the game you are fixed in the centre of the screen, controls scrolling the massive alien around you.

I always thought the first level of a game was supposed to be easy and inviting. Not so with Retrograde! Hordes of alien sprites attack from the moment you begin and, other than nicely relaxing shop visits, it never lets up.

The add-on weapons system is much more sophisticated and better designed than in any other game. Having 12 flying weapons is good in itself but with different power levels for them and an amazing 16 firing directions it's the most versatile system around. With a limited number of weapons useable at once and financial worries, it requires much thought, too.

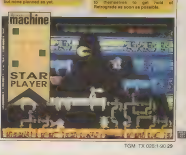
Retrograde is one of the toughest and challenging games around, with considerable lasting interest. Be a planetbuster and try it soon.
WL

OTHER FORMATS
Conversions are under consideration but none planned as yet.

88%

£9.99 cass,
£12.99 disk

Clever colour effects on the title screen lead to a great variety of in-game graphics which also vary in quality. Some sprites and background features are cliched and blocky but others imaginative and well designed. The main character is small and slim yet is remarkably detailed and scrolling, both vertical and horizontal is smooth, the latter direction in reasonable parallax. Music is a lively collection of funky, high-tech and dramatic pieces with complementary spot effects. C64 shoot-'em-up fans owe it to themselves to get hold of Retrograde as soon as possible.



VIRGIN's SANTA

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CONTINENTAL CIRCUS
SILKWORM
NINJA WARRIORS

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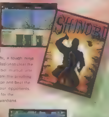
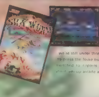


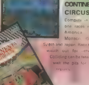
SHINOBI

You're masashi, a tough ninja warrior on a mission to clear the town from rebel martial arts fanatics. Explore the scrolling urban landscape and beat the hell out of your opponents, but watch out for the end-of-level guardians.



SILKWORM

It's not true! Even after months of negotiation with the Ruskies and despite a mass exodus out of Afghanistan, we're still under threat. There's no one left to press the Nuke button so the battle has switched to copters and plane. Non-stop shoot-em-up arcade action.



CONTINENTAL CIRCUS

Compete in formula one races in Brazil, America, France, Monaco, Germany, Spain and Japan. Race hard, but watch out for other cars. Colliding can be fatal. And do visit the pits for fuel and repairs.

GEMINI WING

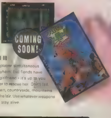
The aliens have had enough. They're not going to take their brothers being blasted on computer screen any more. So they've come down in their hordes to blast the pitiful race of carbon based life forms called humans. Can you stop them? Somebody has to do it.

GEMINI WING

NINJA WARRIORS

COMING SOON!

Can you survive brutal enemy onslaught? Fight with hand, foot and daggers to rid the street of the scum that dare infest your home town. A classic arcade conversion.



DOUBLE DRAGON II

COMING SOON!

Ferocious two-player simultaneous martial arts mayhem! Evil fiends have captured your girlfriend - it's up to you and your brother to rescue her. Don't fail. Through the town, countryside, mountains and finally into the lair. Use whatever weapons you can find to stay alive.

ALL AVAILABLE ON

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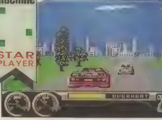
STAR PLAYER



Second time lucky!

TURBO OUT RUN

US Gold

After much deliberation, US Gold have released Sega's sequel, Turbo Out Run. But throw your history books out of the window, US Gold have come up with the goods second time around — almost.

The sequel brings you, and a Ferrari F-40 (bit of an upgrade on the old Testarossa), up against some flash New Yorker (Marshal M Rosenthal perhaps?) and his Porsche 959. You push the temptations of physical violence ■ one side and challenge him to a race across America, New York to Los Angeles. ■ levels split into four races ■ four stages.

Strangely for a sports car, you have the choice of automatic or manual gearbox. Still, there's no complaining when you're racing through the car-packed streets of New York. Drastic measures are needed (you're allowed to break the speed limit, y'know!) to make the first checkpoint in time. And for speed you need a turbo. Kick the beast into action and the Porsche driver will be left fiddling with his furry dice. Watch out, though, excessive use of the turbo results in overheating.

At the end of the first four stages a bonus is awarded, and as an amusing, animated sequence the price for letting the Porsche tear ahead of you ■ paid — your girlfriend leaps out ■ your car and into the other guy's. So get cracking in the workshop where you can choose between a hi-power engine, hi-power tyres and a special turbo. The race to get her back continues through deserts, forests, a very treacherous snowy scene and oily city streets. Five Continue Plays are provided ■ get the gal back ■ your leather bucket seats. See you in Los Angeles...

Both the Sega coin-ops are great fun. The computer versions of Turbo are not only as good they're a helluva lot cheaper. The risk of losing the beautiful blonde to the Porsche owner, as well as the cops always on your tail, adds to the addiction. Want a racing game for Christmas? It's a tough one this year. Compare versions very carefully. Regardless, US Gold have supplied the goods with Turbo Out Run — or my name isn't Santa.

£9.99
cass,
£14.99 disk

Excellent presentation and superb def title track, samples and effects from the Maniacs of Noise create a great atmosphere. It's not just a mere race game, it's a real package. Turbo is fast, colourful and the C64 sprites surprisingly well defined. To choose between this and Power Drift is like choosing between an Amiga and an ST. The Amiga's miles better. Ha ha.

£24.99

On the Amiga, Turbo Out Run is as fast as the C64 — with the addition of car horns and police sirens a welcome bonus. But what's happened to the funky intro tune present on the C64 version? And where's that playability gone? There's not much actually bad about the Amiga version — but the (lack of) use of the machine does not justify the higher. You'll wish you kept your C64 after all. Go get Power Drift this Christmas.

OTHER FORMATS
Spectrum, Amstrad (£9.99 cass, £14.99 disk) and ST (£19.99) versions will be out by the time you read this.

A little tin god

SIM CITY

Infogrames

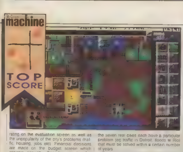
In Populous you played God. Although not quite as powerful, your job as mayor in Sim City isn't easy – difficult decisions have to be made regarding all the problems of an expanding city. The Simulated Citizens of the city act in a realistic human manner, moaning about taxes, pollution, crime etc, and must be kept happy to keep you in office! Your mayoral duties include zoning (designating areas for residential/commercial/industrial development), building roads and light rail tracks, and setting the annual tax rate.

You are given the choice at the beginning of each game to either start a new city, load a city or select one of eight existing scenarios. If you choose to build a city from scratch a new section of land is created, you are then asked to select one of three difficulty levels — this determines your initial budget and the risk of natural disasters. You can then name your city (Ludlow was ■ very popular choice with us), and it's on with the game.

Three types of terrain are present on the map: open spaces, forests (which can be bulldozed to make way for buildings), and water (you can build road bridges and rail tunnels over/under it). To the right of the scrolling map display are the all-important building icons: bulldozer, road, rail track, power line, park, residential, commerce, industry, fire and police departments, power station, sports stadium, and air and sea ports.

The first thing to build on the desolate piece of land you now own is a power station, these come in two types: coal and nuclear – the latter is more powerful but has a slight chance of meltdown! To build, just click on the icon and then on a suitable location on the map — voila one ready-built power plant. If your city is to ■ a financial success you'll need to earn money from external markets, achieved by industrial areas. Of course the workers will need residential areas to live in and commercial sites for shops and offices. However, placing either ■ these type of zones too near to industrial areas makes them unpopular due to the pollution – it's better to put them near water or forest (or build a park nearby). You'll also need a good road/rail network to connect the different areas.

But as ■ the real world your Sims are very quick to moan if your planning isn't to their liking. You can find out your popularity



rating on the evaluation screen as well as the unpopularity of the city's problems (traffic, housing, jobs etc) Financial decisions are made on the budget screen which appears annually. Spending on the fire department, police and transit can be set as well as the tax rate. If the latter is too low you won't cover your expenditure, too high and the Sims will start leaving the city. You can also call up a map and graph to track impending problems.

Additional options include save game, undo (to cancel a mistake), and the disasters menu which allows you have fun destroying your city with anything from tornadoes and earthquakes to a Godzilla-style sea monster!

Rather than build a city from scratch you can tackle one of eight scenarios: Dullsville, San Francisco, Hamburg, Bern, Tokyo, Detroit, Boston, or Rio De Janeiro. Dullsville is a fictional small town which you must try and build into a metropolis while the seven real cities each have a particular problem (eg traffic in Detroit, floods in Rio) that must be solved within a certain number of years.

But whichever scenario you choose, Sim City isn't the sort of game you sit down and play for a few minutes: much thought is needed to decide how to build and run what will hopefully one day be a huge megalopolis. The manual is a hefty beast that needs a good read through to understand the finer points of the game. Building tactics have to be tried and tested to find the best combination and this resulted in many late nights for all in the TGM office (thank goodness for the load/save option)

Although not too difficult to get into, Sim City is a complex game that will provide many hours of fun for all budding city planners.

PK

C64 79%

£19.95
disk only

Commodore Sim City is quite ugly in appearance, the different zones being the same colour as the scenery with harsh overuse of black. The map scrolls jerkily and slowly, and the cursor is equally slothful. Bleeps of acknowledgment pass for sound. A great disappointment.

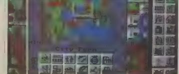
AMIGA 95%

£29.99

The easy-to-use icon system and the promise of hours of architectural fun make Sim City a must buy, even at the slightly higher than usual price.

OTHER FORMATS

A PC (£29.99) version will be available very soon with the Atari ST game appearing early in the New Year, priced £29.99.



VERSION UPDATES

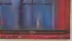
Amiga ■ PC ■ C64

Eye of Horus

LOGOTRON C64 (£9.99 case, £14.99 disk) AMIGA (£24.99) PC (£29.99)
ATARI ST 75% – TGM023

Horus is still at it. On the Amiga, Eye Of Horus is virtually identical to the ST game, the graphics are as detailed and well drawn. On the C64 our hawk-headed hero is a splodgy little guy who wanders aimlessly around the place. PC scrolling is jerky, but like the other versions is very hard to play. If you are an arcade strategy fan take a look, blasters probably won't like it very much.

Machine update Amiga 75% C64 65% PC 62%



COMMODORE 64

Strider

US GOLD £9.99 case, £14.99 disk
Amstrad CPC 69%, Amiga 94%, Atari ST 93% – TGM023

After the excellent 16-bit versions, you'd expect more than this disappointing offering. The graphics are okay; Hiryu is a colourful, if rather porky, character who is still capable of performing his amazing feats. In fact, he needs to on the C64, this version is just too bloody difficult to play. What are US Gold players at?

Machine update 45%

ATARI ST

Ferrari Formula One

ELECTRONIC ARTS £24.99
Amiga 93% – TGM005, PC 75% – TGM025

Although basically similar to the original Amiga version, ST Formula One is too little, too late. When comparing this against such releases as Test Drive II and The Cycles, Electronic Arts' team is sadly left in the pits fiddling with their air wrenches.

Machine update 68%

COMMODORE 64 ■ AMIGA

Dragon Spirit

DOMARK/TENGEN C64 (£9.99 case, £14.99 disk), Amiga (£19.99)
Spectrum 70%, Amstrad CPC 63% — TGM024, Atari ST 69% — TGM025

The Amiga game is as colourful and tough to play as the ST version, though sadly the nasty screen glitch when our hero moves from side to side is still there. Don't bother with the C64 game, it is utter garbage, the sprites are small, ill-defined and look nothing like the characters they are meant to depict.

Machine update Amiga 64% Commodore 64 30%

PRESS ANY KEY

A tube full of smarties

TOOBIN'

Domark

Roads these days are pretty congested. As rebel teenagers Biff and Jet realise the raddest transport available comes in the shape of a car tyre innertube. There's a party going on, so jump on your tubes and get down there. Well, it's not quite as simple as that for our two partygoers. Acid parties are okay, but if you want some real fun you have to travel – and that's where the tube comes in handy. The best parties in the world are always at the end of a river, be it the Amazon, Colorado, Nile, Mars, Hell – you never know where the partying's at next!

Just like at acid parties, the local inhabitants are non too happy with all this merry making. As you (and a friend if you need the help) bounce on down the river you'll be attacked by all sorts of creatures, fly fishermen, punks, swamp monsters and kamikaze penguins, for example. There's also a large range of river predators to prevent your progress: animals like snakes and big crocodiles, along with the usual logs and poisonous plants. However most obstacles can be staved off with a quick bash on the head from your limited supply of tins cans.

As you slip through the water getting extra cans, you can also pick up bonuses for sixpacks of beer, beach balls and the letters that make up Toobin. Real masters of the art of toobing can pick up even more points by guiding themselves through bonus gates strewn all the way down the river stretch. Although, be careful, bashing into the side of gates halves their value.

Unlike the strange arcade game's circle of buttons, computer Toobin' is joystick controlled – but just as challenging. All the attractions of the arcade original have been maintained in Domark's conversion. Playable, addictive and above all, GREAT FUN!

£9.99 cass, £14.99 disk

128K sound on the Spectrum is quite amazing; five of the arcade tunes have been included to set the mood for a very playable conversion. Graphics are colourful, the only slight niggle being that some of the riverbank enemies are a bit indistinguishable from the undergrowth. But, in short, Toobin' on the Spectrum is the best of the three versions here.

ATARI ST 81%

£19.99

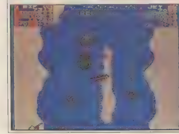
As with the Amiga and still with great tunes Toobin' is one of the craziest games around. ST owners get your armbands out.

AMIGA 80%

£19.99

The background graphics are great, and thankfully the problem of seeing (or rather not seeing) your attackers doesn't arise on the Amiga. But the poor quality of the sprites is just not acceptable on the Amiga. Still, it's playable and the Hispanic tunes set a hot and sweaty atmosphere.

OTHER FORMATS
Amstrad CPC and C64 (£9.99 cass, £14.99 disk) versions should be out now.



Front room bikin'

THE CYCLES

Accolade

Ever fancied having more metal in your legs than your car? Or has the hazardous sport of motorcycling put you off because of this possibility? Either way, Accolade have just the game for you. From the programmers of the hit car game, Test Drive II, comes The Cycles – motorbike racing in your own front room.

Choose to either practice, participate in a single race, or compete in a championship circuit. Set your difficulty level, enter your name and give the amount of laps you can stand (or sit?). Now on to the garage...

Here you have a choice of 125cc (wimpo), 250cc (butch) or 500cc (suicidal) machines. Best to swallow your pride and go for a 125cc first go. (Otherwise you could end up swapping limbs with the crowd on the first corner.) Last question – where to go? Choose from the likes of GB, Japan, Australia, USA, Holland and Austria amongst 15 countries. Now, get into your leathers and onto the track (none of this boring pits stuff!)

The lights turn green and you're off! Difficulty level also chooses whether you have an automatic or manual gearbox. However, one thing's for sure, all the bikes have brakes and you'd better use them pretty soon.

Qualifying is against the clock and decides your place among nine other racers – take too long, though, and you're stopped right there. When qualified, you enter the big race. No messing around here, it's dog eat dog in the big time, so ride to win, there's no glory for runners-up. Most people in the TGM office prefer other means of transport, but this one had us glued to the PC for hours – which can't be bad. The follow-up to Test Drive II was eagerly-awaited, and this'll do great till Test Drive III!

82%

£24.99

The sprites are big and bold. However, detail has not been ignored: the handlebars are a good example of this, showing slick gear changes and sharp braking. Whether going left, right, up or down (!) on the track, the feeling of motorcycling is always there. Speed is obviously a major consideration, and when the box says '8Mhz recommended' it means it! A fast enough PC with EGA graphics will suit all motorcycle and arcade fans.

OTHER FORMATS
C64 and Amiga versions will be available for Christmas, with the Atari ST game following in the New Year, prices TBA.

Griping, grinding and sliming

machine

STAR PLAYER

GHOSTBUSTERS II

Activision

Five years on the 'Busters are down on their luck. All four have resorted to pretty boring, normal lives. However, things start to change when Dana Barrett (Sigourney Weaver) loses control of her baby Oscar's pram while out walking him. It zooms through the New York streets, passed Marshal M Rosenthal's penthouse, and suddenly stops at a particular spot on the road. The Ghostbusters are back in business.

This is where the first section of the three-part computer game begins, with a deep hole already dug, leading down to an underground river of slime. The Ghostbusters need a sample of it for analysis. Lowering Stantz (Dan Aykroyd) down, you can use his beam to zap the various monsters that jump out of the walls, trying to obstruct you or gnaw away at his rope. As you descend, on ledges you find bombs (for awkward monsters), elixir bottles (to restore strength), a shield and three parts of the scoop needed to gain the slime sample.

The Ghostbusters deduce that the noxious slime responds to human emotion and the river is fuelled by the bad feeling of New York's citizens. The river leads to a museum where a painting of ancient, barbaric leader Vego is being restored. His spirit needs a physical form to manifest himself in and Vego has manipulated painter Janos into gaining that form – bye, bye, baby Oscar.

The museum is covered in a wall of bad slime, so the Busters take control of a good old American symbol, the Statue of Liberty. The waves of ghost which attack her as she strides toward the museum can be destroyed with flameballs from her torch. The torch is sustained with slime which is picked up by the New Yorkers that lead Liberty. Fire too fast and they can't keep up with you, ignore them and the ghosts will gobble 'em up.

At the museum, an isometric view of the inner chambers is given, and the Ghostbusters' grip is adjusted as they absail to the floor – too fast and one of the team can be stunned or die. Two with beam and two with positive-mood slime guns, they have to rescue the baby and put both Janos and Vego out of action, thus saving New York from the seventh level of Hell.

Happily Ghostbusters II is one of the few movie scences that actually works. But, to get the bad news over with, the final section, which should be climactic, is rather weak and tedious.

By contrast, the first section is immense fun, spinning and swinging around, blasting a beam in all directions while picking up handy items. Though much less original, the Statue of Liberty shoot-'em-up is almost as good, slime collecting and restricted use of the flameball adding a further dimension.

Presentation is high and adds appeal to a game which, despite the mediocre last section, is quite addictive and succeeds in capturing the atmosphere of the film. You must have already seen Ghostbusters II, the movie. The game will do as well – or better. **WL**

AMIGA 87%

£24.99

Little to add to the ST box except that considering the Amiga's capabilities, graphics could've used more colour. Some lively samples improve the soundtrack, in terms of both music and effects.

AMSTRAD 84%

£9.99
cass,
£14.99 disk

Despite being in shades of yellow and orange, the digitised film pictures are quite good, as is the theme tune. In-game graphics make good use of Mode two, colours liberally used and blockiness kept down to a minimum. Overall, it compares quite well with the 16-bit versions visually, although scrolling's on the jerky side. Sound effects are harsh and noisy but adequate for the Amstrad.

OTHER FORMATS

C64 and Spectrum (Amstrad prices) available as you read this.

ATARI ST 87%

£24.99

In the opening sequence, the ghost of the films' logos strolls out from a stormy New York nightime sky to take his place in the game's title. Cue a great rendition of the familiar theme music. Digitised stills from the film and occasional movie samples accompany the text of the plot. Section one has a good Ghostbuster sprite whose small face is still recognisable (even when grimacing with pain) as Stantz (Dan Aykroyd) and the various creatures all look suitably scary. The parallax scrolling of section two is okay but the backgrounds lack detail and foreground buildings are too colourful: the large Liberty sprite with an appropriately mechanical walk, is the highlight here. The isometric museum interior uses several different shades of grey but has a nasty grainy look and sprites are deformed. Vego is best, the painting changing to that of a giant talking head and a dramatic sprite when he emerges from it. Activision are who you should call for a great licence and great game for your ST.

PRESS ANY KEY

Double trouble from little China

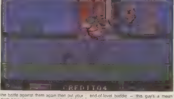
DOUBLE DRAGON II THE REVENGE

Virgin

So you've completed Double Dragon and you're satisfied. Ha! Time to get the black belts out again, one of those hoodlums survived your last little martial arts extravaganza. Yes, years later, the Black Warriors are back to cause havoc, and have once again kidnapped the fated Marilyn — however, they've killed her this time. If you both fancy not, you're gonna have to kick some ninja ass to be on a par with them.

Watch out for crates etc, these are unlikely weapons but can be lifted and lobbed at all and sundry — though watch out for your partner. The energy bar zips down at an alarming rate each time you are hit, so duck and dive.

Get all the weapons you can for each



the battle against them again then put your dosh here. However, we won't feel slighted if only one applies — you've had a bad few years, we understand.

It's revenge this time. Jimmy (and Billy hopefully) start without any weapons (these guys are pros, aren't they?) so first things first, get some knives, guns and hand grenades. The new members of the Black Warriors have got the hardware, so like it or

end-of-level baddie — this guy's a mean mother! Talking of mothers, it's all for Marilyn, remember.

Oriental beat-'em-ups are a bit old hat now, but playable ones are always welcomed on the TGM doormat — as was DDII. It closely follows the coin-op in not only look but also addictiveness. The going is tough with plenty of aggressors and pitfalls to overcome before the final showdown on level five. DDII puts another injection of life into the dying beat-'em-up genre.

ATARI ST 83%

£19.99

Playable, colourful, detailed and, although not the Amiga, decent sound effects and tune. Compared to other 16-bit beat-'em-ups, Double Dragon II — The Revenge is a major improvement and competitively priced.

AMIGA 83%

£19.99

In both the 16-bit versions the bros are colourful, neatly drawn chaps who take their baddie-biffing very seriously. Only gripe is the lack of the Amiga's colour palette for background graphics.

SPECTRUM 82%

£9.99 cass, £14.99 disk

The sprites are monochromatic throughout. Which is great as this means accurate collision detection, detailed graphics and fluid movement — who needs colour? Both Jimmy and Billy stride around the screen with a definite swagger in their walk, though they have good reason to be cocky with the amount of moves they have up their sleeves.

OTHER FORMATS

Expect the C64 and Amstrad versions any day now priced £9.99 cass, £14.99 disk.

Can you beat this game?

SNARE

Thalamus

Very rich people also tend to be pretty strange ones. Andre Thelman was certainly no exception. *Was*, because in this game, set in the 21st Century, Thelman is more than two years dead. But his deranged mind lives on.

During the last ten years he built a futuristic maze — the Snare — constructed from 20 areas of floating platforms and linked by teleports. Weirder still, he put patrolling robot vehicles inside the labyrinth and covered it with pressure-sensitive pads that trigger various devices. It's also strongly rumoured he placed an extremely precious item at the end of the maze — perhaps the deeds to the entire vast estate.

Many people have tried to navigate the entire maze to gain the glittering prize but all have failed. Nevertheless, the challenge of the Snare remains irresistible to some, their number so great that the giant maze is now videotaped for popular television.

You have accepted the challenge and are sitting eagerly at the controls of the standard craft used by all competitors. However, your view of the proceedings is the same as that of Snare TV viewers — a plan view of the area surrounding the craft is given, shifting as it turns such that it always appears to be travelling forwards.

The craft can move at different speeds around the angular geometric platforms, turn instantly to the left or right and jump over gaps between platforms. There are a maximum of four local teleports that help lead to the end of area one but many obsta-

C64/128
81%

£9.99 cass,
£14.99 disk

Snare looks rather plain, platforms lacking in colour and detail, but scrolling ■ smooth, fast and parallax. When turning, the background shifts remarkably quickly, considering the data involved. Sprites are pleasant, the player craft having a nice colourful highlight (changing position as ■ turns), and spot effects are the characteristic atmospheric burbles of Martin Walker.

OTHER FORMATS
None planned.

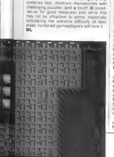
cles stand in the way, not least of which the robot vehicles, despatched with the craft's laser.

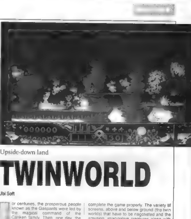
Special tiles complicate matters, preventing jumps or increasing or decreasing speed. Switch tiles are most important, creating new platforms and walkways to bridge unjumpable gaps, but they can be switched back again by robots — dangerous! Fortunately, your craft also has the ability to create walls, enabling robots ■ be trapped, guided or destroyed.

Well it must be said that Rob Stevens, the designer and programmer of Snare, is a cruel, devious son-of-a-bitmapper! Watching someone else play the game, platforms speeding by, viewpoint changing in the blink of an eye, and it seems that just keeping track of the game is task enough. When at the joystick, however, it's not so disorienting, although it still requires considerably dexterity to avoid ■ swift demise.

And then there's the puzzles. Flicking a switch to visibly create a platform is one thing but having to activate a number ■ them in order, take specific routes (disintegrating platforms forcing the way) and build walls to get robots to perform tasks for you, gets a bit much!

Snare is ■ rare and fortunate game that combines fast, dextrous manoeuvres with challenging puzzles (and ■ touch ■ shoot-'em-up for good measure) and while this may not be attractive to some, especially considering the extreme difficulty of later areas, hardened gamesplayers will love it.
WL





Upside-down land

TWINWORLD

Ubi Soft

For centuries, the prosperous people known as the Gaspards were led by the magical command of the Canken family. Then, one day, the family's powers faded and Maldur the Druid led an army to overthrow them – and thus also gaining their magical amulet. However, Maldur soon destroyed the amulet when he discovered the only surviving Canken could use it ■ kill him.

What Maldur didn't know though, was that Ulopa, son of the dead Canken king, survived his army's attack and was brought up by faithful servant Tharox. Now, 14 years on from Maldur's voyage of destruction, the 16-year-old Ulopa is going ■ search ■ the pieces ■ the amulet so that he can banish Maldur and his monsters forever.

Ulopa can run and jump around 23 levels, one for each piece ■ amulet. Armed with red, green and blue magic – red is the weakest and most common, although magic, along with lives, bonus powers and keys, can be picked up — are of use against the roaming guards. Ulopa's stamping movement is also comes ■ handy and can cause holes in weak platforms to jump down through.

Twinworld is a large platform-based arcade adventure with ■ hint of Super Mario Brothers, and as such has both instant appeal and lasting interest. Though Ulopa looks too childlike his leaps and stamps are fun ■ control, but the parabolic flight of his magic is a little irritating to use. Still, having to work out which type to use in which situation — and keeping an eye on their supplies — makes up for it.

Having seen all the levels using a cheat mode (look out for ■ in a future edition of Robin Candy's tips!), it'll take a long time to complete the game properly. The variety ■ screens, above and below ground (the twin worlds) that have to be negotiated and the amusing, imaginative creatures along with fun gameplay ensure you'll ■ interested enough to play through ■ the end. Only you can save the Twinworld from Maldur!
WL

AMIGA
78%

£24.99

Although colourful, the backgrounds are plain and lack detail but, despite the occasional bland creatures, sprites jolly-up the look of the game. Ulopa's body movements are neat and fitting but his head is just too 'kiddy' and is actually quite irritating. Happy little spot effects are adequate and music ■ quite good, ■ dramatic considering the game and its graphics.

OTHER FORMATS
ST very soon and Commodore 64 around January.

PRESS ANY KEY

Gave it the cold shoulder

ESKIMO GAMES

Yes indeed, another variation on the multi-event, multi-player 'sports' theme, this time with ■ distinctly cold and icy feel. Up ■ four players can take part in the five snowy events, the first of which is Operation Snowball. As you'll have assumed, you use the mouse ■ move ■ cursor around the screen the snowballs you fire from ■ shoulder gun. Your targets are eskimos building a giant catapult; let too many wood-carrying men pass by and they build a giant catapult that lands a giant snowball right on top ■ you.

A mobile frame is rolled back and forth along the edge of ■ cliff ■ Eggsterminator so that the rope which hangs from it dangles in front of birds' nests. You have to shin up and down the rope to collect the eggs they lay but avoid contact with the birds themselves; they make you slip into the water, wasting valuable time.

■ Ice 'n' Igloos you stand in front of an ice wall and waggle the joystick to hack out a piece ■ ice with your pick-axe. It then has to be carried over to the partly built igloo, avoiding holes in the ice and Robbi the seal.

There are some very weird tourists in the artic: they like visiting ice cream bars! Masochists! Anyway, you're serving at the bar and must slide their ice creams down the bar to them, collecting the empty dishes which they slide back. Smash too many dishes or fail ■ serve too many customers and a polar bear hits you over the head.

Finally, there's Barbearian (groan!). You have ■ knock out a ■ bear with a ■ stick but be careful ■ where you step – the ring rapidly melts and ■ cold dip in the water means instant defeat.

Epyx's concept ■ multi-event sport was ■ brilliant one, however, Magic Bytes haven't achieved similar standards.

Each event has its faults. Operation Snowball's gun doesn't operate well enough, Eggsterminator is ridiculously simplistic and boring, Miami Ice ■ an inferior and awkward Tapper clone, Barbearian lacks moves and is luck-dependent, and as for Ice 'N' Igloos...! It has to be *the* most frustrating event in the history of the Games and its copies. Joystick response is highly dubious so Robbi the smug seal has become the most hated sprite in TGM. It's ■ shame you can only use the pick-axe on the ice and not on *him*! Save the seal and avoid the game.

WL

AMIGA

42%

£19.99

Backgrounds and sprites are dreadfully simplistic, almost completely lacking in shading. The filled line drawings are crudely animated, bar the odd character. Scrolling ■ unheard of in these old-fashioned game designs and sound is some jolly but mediocre tunes.

OTHER FORMATS

Further versions expected on the ST (£19.99) and C64 (£9.99 cass, £14.99) next year.

Britain's biggest export?

FIGHTING SOCCER

Activision

Despite what you might think, this has nothing whatever ■ do with football hooligans. Instead, it's ■ knock-out tournament involving ten countries 'fighting it out' for the highly sought-after Olympic trophy.

The different play modes are against the computer, a second player, or two players combining forces to thrash the nasty 8- or 16-bit. Action is viewed from above and shows a small segment of the multi-directional scrolling pitch. Beside it ■ ■ status area giving score, time and a small radar display of the whole pitch.

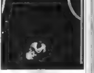
The control system allows kicks of various strengths, headers and sliding tackles – so you can get a *bit* violent.

That's really ■ there is to it but it doesn't even seem like that much when you play it. ■ was okay as an SNK coin-op but as a computer game it's beaten hands down by the likes of MicroProse Soccer, Kick Off and Match Day ■.

The player sprites stroll slowly and aimlessly around in all three versions reviewed, responding awkwardly and sluggishly to joystick control. Making headway to ■ goal is usually a matter of luck or sheer bloody-mindedness, charging through the opposition – accurate passing and skill are the stuff ■ dreams.

Put simply, Fighting Soccer ■ awkward and boring to play so you're unlikely to want to get past the first round, least ■ all win the championship. Footy fans should take their studded boots and halftime oranges elsewhere.

WL



AMIGA

29%

£24.99

An animated sequence, common to all versions, shows ■ colourful scene of a footballer banana-shooting a ball into the back of the net. Sprites are well shaded but animation is simple and they move slowly, as does the reasonable scrolling. Audio is disposable jingle music and harsh inappropriate effects.

SPECTRUM

28%

£9.99

Black-on-green sprites are little more than square line drawings and though they move at a passable speed, animation is jerky, as is the scrolling. Sound is little more than a grating buzz but at least the Spectrum version responds reasonably to control. However, it's still an uninteresting kickabout that's best avoided.

C64/128

23%

£9.99
cass,
£14.99 disk

This looks depressingly like a Spectrum game (no offence intended). Other than the ball, status panel and the sprite currently under the player's control, the game is black-on-colour monochrome and the small design of the poorly animated sprites makes the 'action' rather hard to follow. Music ■ highly repetitive, using old C64 sounds, and effects are crude white noise.

OTHER FORMATS

Amstrad CPC (C64 prices) out now, ST to follow.

Get the moonboots out for winter

MOONWALKER

US Gold

Our Michael's adventure begins on the backlot of ■ movie studio. A weird assortment of fans have snuck in, and are desperate to obtain one of the superstar's 20 platinum disks (lives). To escape you must find a disguise (seven pieces of ■ rabbit suit), the key ■ a motorbike and some souvenirs. Your quest ■ shown from an overhead view, with ■ radar scanner to show distant baddies, but not the walls of the maze.

The next level takes place ■ another maze, this one divided up into four sections. Mr Big and his goons are in pursuit now, and you must run over bags of drugs and collect glowing green orbs. Once all the orbs have been collected you turn into ■ car, but only for ten seconds. If you don't jump into the next maze during this time you turn back into a rabbit and must start collecting the orbs again. The last part of the maze takes place on jetbikes.

The third part of the game finally escapes from the maze format to a shoot-'em-up one. As hoods open fire from windows above, you can run left, forcing a horizontal scroll, looking for a gun and ammo. Once tooled up you can move a cursor about, shooting back while dodging the bullets. Kill enough baddies and it's on to stage four.

One of Michael's friends has been kidnapped and is being held hostage in Mr Big's lair. Michael now turns into a massive robot (who's he kidding?), standing in the centre of a room packed with heavily armed hoods. As it rotates you can blast the hoods and the huge plasma cannon which occasionally pokes its nose in to slowly take aim.

As the game structure makes clear, US Gold seem to have fallen in love with mazes. ■ packed with lots and lots of baddies. One of these would've been bad enough, but five have you tearing your hair out. Fortunately we had some cheat versions, allowing progression to the later shoot-'em-up levels. These are both quite fun but only hardened maze maniacs will get to see them.

MC

C64
62%

£9.99
cass,£14.99
disk

The C64 version is pretty close to the Amiga one graphically, which isn't saying that much, admittedly, but the shoot-'em-up levels are very nice. Sonics are okay but with such poor playability only the most avid Jacko whacko fans will enjoy it.

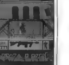
AMIGA
65%

£24.99

Moonwalker starts with some impressive Bad samples but the tunes get repetitive after a while. Graphics start out badly with the poor maze games, and improve only to average for the other levels.

OTHER FORMATS

Spectrum, Amstrad CPC (£9.99 cass, £14.99 disk) and Atari ST (£19.99) versions are available now.



Logotron get BAD, too

BAD COMPANY

Logotron

The Bad Company were formed by Company Command to be the ultimate killing machines — and they're good at their job. This is ■ story of their latest, and possibly last, mission.

Earth ■ slowly dying, its atmosphere polluted by the billions ■ inhabitants. Therefore another planted is needed if Man ■ to continue existence. As luck would have it, not one but four habitable planets have been discovered. The Nu-Worlds seem perfect, except that they already have occupants: a race of alien lifeforms that hate humans. But the planets must be conquered: call in the professionals.

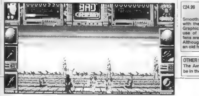
Eight members make up the merciless team. Choose from Lance 'Flash' Gordon, Leroy 'Shades' Henriksen, Stefan 'Ironside' Hunter, Met Steinberg, Athena De Santez, Chronos Warchild, Sandi Kalishnov and Bruce 'Maniac' North. Each member has their own characteristics, so choose carefully.

Your representative is dropped onto the surface of the first world with only a Farnham P111 Megadeath and a Zarman T90 Killomatic. Other weapons can ■ collected by shooting ■ black spheres dropped by the Company Command. Special boosters can be picked up to improve the power of your current weapon.

The screen scrolls vertically, with the aliens charging down towards. Hits from their laser bolts results in an energy loss, which eventually builds up ■ ■ loss of life. But Company Command have thought of this and provide three life regenerators.

Programmed by Steve Bak (who's credits include Gold runner and Return to Genesis), it's basically a fairly simple shoot-'em-up. Bad Company's well presented, although you'd expect more from ■ programmer of such calibre.

MC



ATARI ST
72%

£24.99

Smooth, fast-moving sprites keep up with the relentless pace of the game. Graphics are well-detailed, with a good use of colour and shading. Blasting fans are certainly well catered for here. Although it's too expensive for such an old formula.

OTHER FORMATS

The Amiga version priced £24.99 will be in the shops for Christmas.

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CENTRE BYTES

TGM026

THE PUNISHERS

[illegible] one, but [illegible] with [illegible] cult [illegible]. Fear not as the Centre Bytes team look at all the popular joysticks around, plus some newer and more innovative ones [illegible] out the punishment.

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PC SOUND CARDS.........52
If you thought PC sound was bad, think again! The latest add-on board will not just give you sound equaling the arcade, it'll be better!
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SURESHOT COMMAND MODULE

Sonmax, £17.95

If you hate small joycards, you'll love this stick — it's enormous! The base is obviously too big to be held in the hand so six suckers are provided to secure it to the nearest desktop. It comes complete with a button-controlled autofire option — ie. you only autofire when the fire button is depressed, not as soon as the switch is on.

While the panel's design is non too attractive (though the red and black splodges are supposed to 'simulate' a computer keyboard), the size of it makes it very sturdy and likely to survive even the most vigorous joystick waggling game. The travel on the actual stick is quite short allowing for precise movements — combined with the excellent autofire, it's ideal for shoot-'em-ups.

TGM GUIDE

An excellent stick 9/10

9

SURESHOT SUPREME

Sonmax, £14.95

Similar to the Sureshot Standard but with two fire buttons. Another joystick with too much travel on the stick. It felt a bit dodgy on the swimming section of Hypersports and eventually the handle snapped off at the base after some strenuous weight-lifting. The problem with this stick and the Sureshot Standard/Designer seems to be the small circle of plastic (the circlip) that secures the handle to the base. It just isn't strong enough to cope with anything other than tame games. This small improvement could make it a good stick.

TGM GUIDE

TGM GUIDE: Steer clear. Broke on the first go of Hypersports. 1/10

1

SURESHOT STANDARD

Sonmax, £10.95

An attractive stick with a moulded pistol grip handle which fits snugly in your hand. However, there is a bit too much travel on the stick which makes it feel as if it's going to break at any moment. While it's reasonably strong, it's hard to see it lasting too many vigorous goes in Hypersports. After testing on tougher games, the handle started to twist in the hand rendering the joystick useless.

The shape of the base makes it virtually impossible to hold in your hand and fire at the same time, while the long travel of the stick means that in fast-moving games you put as much effort into holding the stick steady as playing the game. In view of this it would have been nice if a few suckers had been supplied.

Firing action is fine but there is no audible click when the button is pressed.

TGM GUIDE

Too flimsy and too much travel. 3/10.

3

[illegible]PETITION [illegible] [illegible]TRA/PRO PC

Dynamics Marketing, £14.99

This stick is ugly! It's not so much the shape (it's shaped exactly like the old Kempston joysticks) but the colour. Do you really want an acid green joystick? There's also a Day-glo pink version, should you have absolutely no colour taste. Colour aside, though, it's excellent. It can be held in the hand comfortably, responds well and, more importantly, it's strong.

However, there's one problem: the fire buttons. They work well, but the microswitches aren't as durable as the movement ones. Subsequently, if anything does go wrong it's the fire buttons packing up. This happened to us a few times. Although, a good autofire is provided to preserve the buttons.

The PC version is moulded in grey and cream, presumably because PC owners want to match all their peripherals to the colour scheme of their computers. However to get the stick working with you PC you'll need an interface. Dynamics recommend their own Compro A/D games card. (They would.)

TGM GUIDE

One of the best sticks available 7/10

7

QUICKSHOT II

Spectravideo, £6.95

A few years ago this was the most popular joystick available.

With suction feet, pistol grip handle and trigger fire button, it can be operated easily with just one hand - great on games where you still need to use the keyboard. The fire buttons give a good click when pressed, but they're a bit stiff and it's hard to build up rapid fire without resorting to the autofire switch. The actual stick responds well, although, as time has told, it's not too sturdy. The stick doesn't snap, the directions just become less reliable.

TGM GUIDE

The shape is of the stick is excellent but it is let down by flimsy design. Nevertheless, it's great value for money. 7/10.

7

SURESHOT DESIGNER

Sonmax, £9.95

Presumably called the Designer because you have to put it together yourself. It's hard to see the point of this since: a) it's a bit fiddly and very easy to lose some of the components; b) you can only put it together in one design. It would have been better if Sonmax had provided a few extra base designs and some alternative handle grips — then you really would be designing your own stick. Basically, once assembled it's a Sureshot Standard stick and the same criticisms apply.

TGM GUIDE

If you like the idea of putting a joystick together yourself, take an injection moulders course at your local college. 3/10

3

CRUISER
Power Play, £12.99

Available in a variety of colours from just matt black (for gothic gamers) to multi-coloured designs (distinctive but horrible), the Cruiser is one of the TGM office's favourite sticks. It can be held comfortably while suckers are provided for extra stability. It is popular because it's not only durable, but also responsive. You can waggle to your heart's content, then flick to Kick Off in the knowledge that every movement is being accurately interpreted.

TGM GUIDE

One of the best sticks available. 9/10.

9

CRYSTAL
Power Play, £14.99 (standard), £16.99 (autofire)

Other than the colour scheme (it's available in clear, red or green plastic) the Cruiser looks identical to the Sureshot Supreme. In use, the travel on the stick is too long and it's only marginally stronger than the Supreme. It survived a couple of goes on Hypersports but had to be twisted back into shape afterwards.

TGM GUIDE

Too weak. 4/10.

4

QUICKSHOT II TURBO
Spectravideo, £10.50

Basically a redesigned Quickshot II. It still includes the same shaft and fire buttons but Spectravideo have added six new microswitches for durability. The fire buttons have also been improved and are no longer so stiff.

TGM GUIDE

TGM GUIDE. A great improvement over the original Quickshot II. 8/10

8

QUICKSHOT WIZMASTER
Spectravideo, £11.95

Don't be fooled by pictures of this joystick. It is, in fact, tiny. One novel feature is that it can be taken apart. Not only is the stick removable (directional movement is then via four buttons) but the multi-adapter (which allows you to switch between various consoles and computers) can be separated from the base so you can fix different bases to the stick. The Wizmaster is just like one of those joypads which you get free with consoles. As it's so small, it is only really suited to certain types of games. Playing Hypersports was impossible but it wasn't too bad on Dropzone.

TGM GUIDE

As far as joypads go, this is one of the better ones but at TGM we would prefer to play games with a 'proper' joystick. 5/10

5

ZIPSTICK SUPERPRO
STANDARD/AUTOFIRE
Sonmax, Standard £13.95 Autofire £14.95

With such attractive aesthetics, the Superpro is a good all-rounder. It sailed through the joystick-bashing games with flying colours — the combination of suckers and a strong secure handle means that it's likely to remain in good condition for a long time.

The fire buttons are excellent. Not only are they very soft to touch but they click when pressed. The autofire version is great too.

Perhaps the only criticism is it's too responsive: sometimes Movements can be a little exaggerated, making it tricky to make those precision passes in Kick Off.

TGM GUIDE

Great for blasting games 8/10

8

DELTA 2000
Delta, £9.95

A metal shaft secures the stick to the base making it very strong — but the stick still doesn't feel right. Microswitches detect movement but there's some sort of cushioning device inside the stick that makes it feel rubbery. It's the only thing wrong with the stick -- and enough to put you off.

TGM GUIDE

Performs well in all respects but too soft to use. 6/10

6

ULTIMATE STANDARD JOYSTICK
Euromax, £11.95

Euromax produce joysticks for arcade machines, so you'd expect them to come up with something like this — a huge design with lots of fire buttons: two on either side of the stick to suit left- or right-handed players. The stick is made of metal and firmly secured within the base. Subsequently, there's very little chance of it breaking off.

It's also very responsive. The fire buttons could have been improved but an excellent variable autofire option compensates.

TGM GUIDE

Great value for money 8/10

8

CHALLENGER REMOTE CONTROL
Euromax, £29.95

Remote control joysticks have never really taken off. Cheetah tried it a few years back with the RAT joypad but it didn't work that well.

The remote receiver (which resembles a mouse) plugs into the joystick port. The actual stick is, as you would expect, totally free from external cables but needs to be pointed at the receiver to work. The travel of the stick is short and microswitches make it responsive.

There is a very slight delay while the signal sent from the stick is interpreted by the receiver — which is very off-putting on games that require quick and precise movement. The actual stick itself looks fine but, due to the position of the fire button, is difficult to hold for any time.

TGM GUIDE

It's hard to see the reasoning behind a remote control joystick. You have to be reasonably close to the screen to see what's going on so you are hardly restricted by a cable. Remote control aside, it's not a particularly good design to hold in the hand. 5/10

5

THE DEFENDER LIGHTGUN
Cheetah, £24.95

Undoubtedly the best lightgun around but it's only available for the Spectrum and C64. Lightguns have never been much cop but this one really does work — and well.

There's software too. Cheetah have combined the gun with six Code Masters games to provide a high value package. Although just rehashes of old ideas, the games work well, with none of those nasty screen glitches that the recent Sinclair gun has.

The gun itself is also well designed. Since you're just pointing it at the screen it's unlikely to get broken. The only moveable part is the trigger, which is responsive and gives and audible click.

TGM GUIDE

While you can only use the gun on six games at the moment it is tremendous fun. Hopefully, more games will appear soon. 7/10

7

[illegible]
Euromax, £14.95

This unit simulates the accelerate and brake foot pedals of a car. You plug the foot controller into the joystick port then plug your normal joystick into the Turbo Pedal. It then takes over the up and down controls of the joystick, which is used for left, right and fire controls only. Most car/motorcycle games use these controls so this is great. One problem we had was that the Pedal isn't heavy enough and subsequently flies over the floor when in use. A few carpet grips on the bottom would have been appreciated. At first, it's also pretty difficult to ignore the up and down of the joystick but this is soon mastered.

TGM GUIDE

A novel device, though it's appeal is really limited to fans of driving games. 5/10

5

MEGABLASTER
Konix, £6.99

One of the cheapest and smallest joysticks available. The Megablaster fits into the palm of the hand comfortably though the fire buttons could do with being a bit bigger.

When tested, it survived several goes on Hypersports and is stronger than expected. Accuracy for intricate movements is not too good however.

TGM GUIDE

A good joystick for the price. 5/10

5

CONTACTS

Cheetah Marketing Ltd: Norbury House, Norbury Road, Fairwater, Cardiff CF5 3AS. Tel: (0222) 555525
Dynamics Marketing Ltd: Coinhouse, New Coin Street, Royton, Oldham, Lancashire OC2 6JZ. Tel: (061) 6267222
Euromax Electronics Ltd: Bessingby Industrial Estate, Bridlington, North Humberside Y016 4SJ. Tel: (0262) 601006
Konix: Creative Devices Research, Unit 35, Rassau Industrial Estate, Ebbw Vale, Gwent. Tel: (0495) 350101
Power Play Ltd: Slackcote Lane, Delph, Oldham OL3 5TW. Tel: (04577) 6601
Sonmax Ltd: Units 1-4, 1 Wakefield Road, Drighlington, Nr Bradford, West Yorkshire BD11 1DH. Tel: (0532) 852629
Spectravideo: Unit 27, Northfield Industrial Estate, Beresford Avenue, Wembly, Middlesex HA0 1NU. Tel: (01) 9000024

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The TGM Centre Bytes joystick test took place at normal room temperature and involved three 'average build' testers. Each joystick was, where possible, used on Hypersports, Kick Off and Dropzone, to test accuracy, travel and durability. They have been rated out of a possible ten marks, taking into consideration price and performance.

XENON TECHNOLOGY

ATARI ST EDITORS
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Gunship Editor (£4.95)

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- Pilot's name
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- Decorations (Medals etc)
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So you're missing in action or just plain dead? Show God a thing or two and resurrect yourself! Wanna show your gongs to the ladies! (oo-er!) Here, have a Congressional medal or two. Want some more stripes on your sleeve? Certainly - Coonel! Wipe those nasty reprimands? What nasty reprimands?

Airbourne Ranger Editor (£4.95)

Edits:

- Ranger's Name
- Score
- Status
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- Campaign Duty
- Decorations (Medals etc)

Stuck on a campaign with nowhere to go? Sneak out with ease! Dead or missing? Nah, must have been a mistake... Want some more medals? Sure. Add a little to your score? OK! Want to go up in the ranks? No problem!

Elite Editor (£9.95)

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- Commander's Name
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S-S-SOUND STEALING

Records like Paul Hardcastle's 19 and Black Box's Ride On Time show the popular face of sampling — unnatural vocal stutters and 'pieces' of sounds from other sources. These days, few records are made without a sampler being involved somewhere along the line. Samplers are also used to recreate acoustic instruments such as pianos, trumpets or whole string sections, which synthesisers find difficult to do accurately. They're a relatively cheap means of expanding your musical setup: any sound fed into one can be used as an instrument. The Centre Bytes team reveal all you need to know about sampling.

So what is a sampler?

Basically a sampler is a hardware device that converts sounds into digital data, then reconverts the data back into sound. During the process you can make alterations to the data which will ultimately effect the sound of the sample when it is played back — stutter effects or reverse playing the sound, for example.

To understand how a sampler works it helps if you understand a little about sound itself.

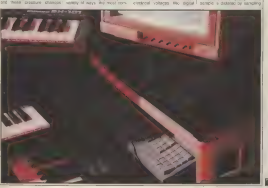
Sound is created by very small changes in air pressure and these pressure changes are known as sound waves. To give you an idea of what a sound wave is, imagine throwing a pebble into a still pond. It creates water ripples flowing outwards, but decreasing in size the further away you get. Essentially this is how sound is dispersed from its source.

Sound is made up of three component parts: pitch (frequency), amplitude (volume) and timbre (essentially the tonal quality of a sound). A flute and a violin could be playing at the same pitch and volume but they will still sound different, this is all down to timbre. Sound waves can be depicted graphically in a variety of ways, the most common is which [illegible] changes in amplitude over time.

Sound is fed into a sampler through a mic input or phono socket. What the sampler actually records is changes in voltage rather than sound itself. A microphones converts changes in air pressure into electrical voltage signals using a simple mechanism called a diaphragm. When there is no sound, the diaphragm remains stationary, but when the pressure becomes higher than normal the diaphragm is pushed inwards. When the pressure is lower than normal it is pulled outwards. Whenever the diaphragm moves from its normal position, an electrical voltage is produced. The further the position of the diaphragm is displaced, the higher the voltage. If the diaphragm is pulled inwards the voltage is positive, outwards the voltage is negative. So, sound in the form of a continuously changing pressure wave is changed into a continuously changing electrical wave.

A sampler converts these electrical voltages into digital data, rather like a movie camera records motion. A camera records motion by taking lots of photographs of a scene at a rapid rate. When the frames are played back rapidly, one after another, we see motion. A sampler works in a similar way by taking 'snapshots' of sound. A device called an Analog to Digital Converter (ADC) actually takes the snapshots. The ADC measures the height of the sound wave at a given time and stores the value in memory. It then takes another snapshot and repeats the process. If enough snapshots are taken within a given time it is possible to recreate the original sound waveform by converting the digital values back to voltage levels in the same order that they were sampled (this is done by a Digital to Analog Convertor). These voltage levels are then relayed to a speaker. They then cause the speaker cone to vibrate at different resonances, which in turn creates the sound waves we hear.

However, the quality of the sample is dictated by sampling



rate — which is basically how fast the snapshots are taken. The more snapshots taken within a given time, the more accurate the representation of the original sound.

While fooling the eye into seeing motion requires relatively few pictures the ear isn't so easily conned. It takes many thousands of snapshots per second to accurately recreate sound.

The sampling rate also effects fidelity. Lower sampling rates aren't capable of recording higher frequencies so the tonal quality of the sound changes and hissing may be introduced into the sound. Samples of sounds containing high frequencies taken at a low sample rate tend to sound tinny.

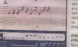
Sampling rates are specified in kilohertz. We can hear frequencies up to about 18-20Khz if our hearing is good. But you will notice literature on samplers normally talks of much higher rates, 40Khz for instance. What's the point of sampling at a rate that you can't hear? Well, someone once calculated that you have to take two snapshots for each little slice of a sample to accurately reproduce it. So a sampling rate of 40Khz actually records frequencies [illegible] up 20Khz.

The quality of a sample is also effected by sampling bit-resolution. When a snapshot is taken and converted into a digital value, the computer has a range of possible values that it can choose from. This range of values is determined by the bit resolution of the sampler. An 8-bit sampler has up to 256 values to choose from, while a 16-bit sampler has a range of 65536 values. Low bit-resolution samplers can't recreate each subtle nuance in a sound because they don't have a wide enough value range to represent each slight change in timbre, frequency or amplitude. Therefore, all other things being constant, a 16-bit sampler produces a more accurate sample than a 8-bit sampler. Generally speaking, samplers available for home computers (including the ST and Amiga) are only 8-bit.

One last major consideration to make when sampling is the available memory. A sample taken at a high rate, with more snapshots per second, generates more values than one taken at a low rate, thus requiring more memory. As high-quality samples require more memory, the amount of sample time is less than that of a lower rate. Therefore sampling is a trade-off between length and quality.

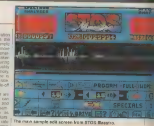
It's worth noting that there are a couple of techniques that can be used to save memory and increase the length of your samples. Deep sounds, such as bass drums and bass guitars can be sampled at a lower rate because they don't contain many high frequencies. Some samplers feature a loop function which allows you to sustain a sound for longer than it was sampled. It does this by replaying a specific section of a sample over and over again giving the impression that the sample was longer than it actually was. Unfortunately, fully-featured loop options are only really available on professional dedicated samplers costing hundreds of pounds. However, a lot of sounds can be sampled in a very short time. A typical drum sound take up less than a second of sample time.

Computer samplers are capable of producing some very good samples, but they don't have the editing capabilities of the more expensive professional, dedicated samplers.


Sequence your samples with the music notation screen on Quartet.

PRODUCT ProSound Gold
PRODUCER Power Computing, 44a Stanley Street, Bedford MK41 7RW Tel. (0234) 273000
PRICE £49.95
SYSTEMS Atari ST, Amiga
SAMPLE RATES 3-30Khz
INPUT SOCKET 3.5mm jack
EFFECTS Echo and reverb
EDITING Cut and paste, fade in/out, magnify and reverse
TGM GUIDE One of the cheaper samplers available. The quality of the samples is reasonably good though not quite up to the standard of Replay 4 or AMAS. The software makes this an attractive package to newcomers. A good screen design helps take away the 'techy' stigma attached to sampling. It's easy to use and definitely recommended.

PRODUCT [illegible] Digiliser
PRODUCER IS Computing, 117 Manor Lea, Boundary Road, Worthing, Sussex BN11 4RP Tel. (0903) 213614.
PRICE £69.95
SYSTEM Atari ST.
SAMPLE RATES 1-48Khz.



The main sample edit screen from STOS Maestro.

INPUT SOCKET Phono.
EFFECTS Echo, reverb
EDITING The usual set of cut and paste, reverse, fade in/out and magnify commands. A volume control is provided to increase or decrease the sample's volume: useful when sampling from a quiet source. Such an obvious control is missed out on many samplers.
TGM GUIDE Unlike most sampler packages this one makes more use of the keyboard rather than the mouse — at least you don't have to bother with unrecognisable icons. Cosmetically the screen presentation is poor when compared to some of the other samplers reviewed. However, in use it's very easy to find your way around.

The actual samples produced are some of the best quality ones found on the ST.

Two complementary packages are available [illegible] Spectroscope (£39.95) is useful for analysing sample data while the [illegible] MIDI Sample Player (£24.95) is a sequencing package to get your samples working in conjunction with other MIDI equipment.

PRODUCT STOS Maestro
PRODUCER Mandarin Software, Europa House, Adlington Park, Macclesfield SK10 4NP Tel. (0625) 878888
PRICE £69.95 with sampling cartridge, £29.95 without
SYSTEM Atari ST. The Maestro Plus is designed for use with Mandarin's games creation package, STOS BASIC (though it can be used without it). Since the software is being converted to the Amiga expect to see Amiga hardware too. Next year for that, though.
SAMPLE RATES 5-32Khz
INPUT SOCKET Phono
EFFECTS Echo and reverb.
EDITING Cut and paste, fade in/out, mix (allows you to mix two samples into one), amplify/soften, reverse.
TGM GUIDE STOS Maestro is a very well put together package. The quality of samples is good (you get a free disk with over 50 ready made samples — there's also a STOS user club with a large sample library), it's easy to use, the manual is well-written and it's compatible with ProSound and Replay files.

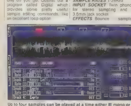
Also included in the package is a drum program that allows you to design your own drum patterns. However, the sampler's raison d'etre is STOS BASIC. The manual details all the procedures necessary to get the samples working within your STOS programs.

PRODUCT Replay 4
PRODUCER Microdeal, PO Box 68, St Austell, Cornwall PL25 4YB Tel (0726) 68020
PRICE £79.95
SYSTEM Atari ST
SAMPLE RATES 5-60Khz
INPUT SOCKET Phono
EFFECTS Echo, reverb, distortion and reverb-up (this adds reverb and alters the pitch of the sample) available using a separate program on the Replay disk.
EDITING Cut and paste, fade in/out, magnify, mix and reverse.
TGM GUIDE The Replay range of samplers have been around for quite a while now and are always undergoing continuous improvement. In fact, Microdeal will shortly be releasing Replay Professional as their top of the range sampler — a full review as soon as it becomes available.

As to Replay 4, it's currently the best sampler available for the ST. The quality of the samples is about as good as you're going to get on an 8-bit sampler, while the software is very simple to use.

MIDI options allow you play a sample from a MIDI keyboard, you can even assign up to ten different samples to respond to different keys. Finally, a drum machine program is now bundled with the package which can be used with your samples as a psuedo-mini-sequencer.

PRODUCT Quartet
PRODUCT Microdeal, PO Box 68, St Austell, Cornwall PL25 4YB. Tel: (0726) 68020.
PRICE £49.95.
SYSTEM Atari ST.
TGM GUIDE: Not strictly speaking a sampler but a sample player. Quartet allows you to import samples from other samplers, including the Replay range, and write your own music using traditional music notation. There are four staves to write music on and you can only play four samples at a time but by quickly switching between samples you can make a piece of music sound quite complex. It's reminiscent of Sonix on the Amiga but a lot more sophisticated offering bar loops and slides. You can input music from a MIDI keyboard but as the program automatically quantises your performance to the nearest quaver fast trills are definitely out. If you own an ST sampler or have access to someone's sample library this is a good buy. Not only do you get Quartet but a program called Digital which provides some pretty useful sample editing commands, like an excellent loop option.

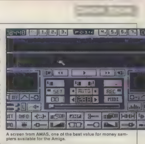


Up to four samples can be played at a time either in mono or stereo on Future Sound.

PRODUCT Future Sound
PRODUCER Applied Visions, Jersey Supreme Works, 538-546 Whippendell Road, Watford, Herts WD1 1QN. Tel. (0923) 818078.
PRICE £79.99
SYSTEM Amiga.
SAMPLE RATES 5-42Khz
INPUT SOCKET Twin phonos and 3.5mm jack socket.
EFFECTS None.
EDITING Cut and paste, reverse, mix, zero sound (adds a totally silent section to any part of the sample) and scale sound (lets you boost or decrease the volume of any part of the sample).
TGM GUIDE A good stereo sampler which is easy to use. The only real drawback is that it is slightly overpriced in view of the lack of any bundled sequencing software or MIDI ports. However, samples can be saved out in the Amiga standard IFF format for inclusion in music programs.

PRODUCT Sound Digitiser
PRODUCER Trilogic, Unit 1, 253 New Works Road, Bradford BD12 0QP. Tel: (0274) 678062
PRICE £37.99 stereo, £27.99 mono.
SYSTEM Amiga.
TGM GUIDE This is just the sampling hardware there is no software supplied. On its own, it isn't really much use but it does work with the ProSound, Future Sound and Audiomaster sampling software. Bearing in mind the cost of separate sampling software (Audiomaster costs around £45) perhaps it could be a bit cheaper.

PRODUCT AMAS
PRODUCER Microdeal, PO Box 68, St Austell, Cornwall PL25 4YB. Tel. (0726) 68020
PRICE £69.95
SYSTEM Amiga
SAMPLE RATES 1-28Khz
INPUT SOCKET Twin phonos for stereo sampling and a 3.5mm jack socket
EFFECTS Bounce samples can be panned across from left to right channels
EDITING Cut and paste, fade in/out, volume control, mix and reverse. Also shrink option allows you to compress a sample so that it takes up less memory. It produces better results than sampling at a lower rate
TGM GUIDE AMAS is another great sampler created by the same designers of Replay 4 on the ST. The quality of the samples is great but what makes this sampler a much more attractive buy than other Amiga samplers are the built-in MIDI In, Out and Thru ports. Normally a MIDI interface alone will cost around £30



A screen from AMAS, one of the best value for money samplers available for the Amiga.

PRODUCT Armadeus
PRODUCER Clares Micro Supplies, 98 Middlewich Road, Rudheath, Northwich, Cheshire CW9 7DA. Tel: (0606) 48511
PRICE £149.95 sampler board, £79.95 Armadeus software
SYSTEM Archimedes.
SAMPLE RATES 4-76Khz.
INPUT SOCKET 9mm jack socket and phono.
EFFECTS Echo
EDITING Cut and paste, mix, magnify, reverse, fade in/out, and scale up/down volume
TGM GUIDE An excellent product. It's the only home computer sampler we found that allows you to do proper looping. When a loop option is normally included on these types of samplers it repeats the whole sample. Armadeus allows you to repeat any section of a sample and therefore create long, sustained samples without any gaps in them. With the high screen resolution of the Archie, Armadeus gives you a really detailed picture of the recorded wave form which is absolutely terrific for editing. MIDI options allow you create keyboard splits on your MIDI keyboard but you will have to buy Acorn's MIDI interface to take advantage of these options. The Armadeus software also works with a variety of other Archimedes sample boards and is even capable of porting samples across from the ST. If you've got an Archimedes buy it.

Yet another good reason to buy the Archimedes

GLOSSARY

PRODUCER Who to contact
SYSTEMS Computers available for
SAMPLE RATES Range of sample quality
INPUT SOCKET A phono plug is the most common input socket but some samplers do use 3.5mm or 9mm jack plugs. Once you've bought your sampler, a trip to the local electrical store may be in order to stock up on the various types of audio leads and plug adapters necessary to connect different sound sources to the sampler
EFFECTS Most samplers allow you alter the overall sound of your sample dramatically by adding some sort of sound effect such as an echo or reverb
EDITING When you record a sample you will undoubtedly record sounds just before and after it. These can be erased using mark and cut commands. Alternatively you can paste a block to reorder the contents of the sample. For instance to create a Max Headroom style stutter you mark the bit you want to stutter, then copy it many times before the rest of the sample. The cut and paste option are probably the most crucial editing commands. However, they're not really much use without a magnify option to zoom in on the sound wave for exact editing. Other useful commands reverse the sample (great for percussion effects); overlay or mix samples to form one new one; and fade in/out the start and ends of the sound, adding another dimension to the process.
TGM GUIDE Our opinion, bearing in mind price, quality of sample output and ease of use. However, many computer samplers use very similar hardware and tend to produce very similar results in terms of sample quality. Many are compatible with each other.

Breaking the s

When IBM conceived the PC, it was never meant to be used as a games machine. PCs are for stuffy businessmen, right? Wrong, as any TGM reader will know. Around 50% of games are now developed on PCs. It's got great VGA graphics, it's faster than an ST or Amiga, but it has one problem — sound. PC sound is only rivalled for the Beeps in a Tin award by the Spectrum — till now. Paul Rigby looks at three top sound cards for PCs and compatibles. Sound cards that would send ST and Amiga chips reaching for the mute button

If the PC has one claim to fame it's the amazing knack it has of producing absolutely abysmal sound. None too surprising, as when IBM introduced the PC they never envisaged it as a computer to play games on. Of course, the PC is capable of simple digitised effects but they tend to take a wodge of memory and are still fairly poor quality.

However, thankfully, the PC is totally modular. Need an extra feature? Insert a relevant, feature-packed card into the back of your PC and you're away It is via this route that aural accompaniment to PC processing is being revolutionised by the PC sound card! There are many sound cards on the market — honestly — trouble is they are all sold exclusively in America. Until now that is. Recently there has been a tremendous upsurge in sound card activity, from hardware and software companies alike, on both sides of the Atlantic. In fact, activity has reached a point where TGM says to all PC owners. YOU NEED A SOUND CARD! They can be ignored no longer.

I have taken a good look at all of the cards available and, for a variety of reasons, have selected three for review. More of which later. But for now here's a quick resume of the cards that did not quite make it. I mention them if only for you to be able to recognise and avoid.

The first rejection is the Covox Sound Master PC. This card is based on the AY8930 chip; similar to the chip found in STs. It also has an 8-bit direct memory access digitiser, stereo amplifier and two Atari-type joystick ports. In addition, you receive two 2.25-inch mini-speakers. This all sounds very impressive, except for two things. The joystick ports are useless as they are non-standard (for PCs that is) and support is very poor. Only one game that I know of (688 Attack Sub from Electronic Arts) has any support for it at all — and then only minimal. In addition, there are few companies looking at it for future support.

Next on the scrap heap comes the Innovation SSI2001 Sound Board. This card is based on Commodore's HMOS 6851 — yes, the good ol' SID

ADLIB

Electrone £149.95

Next up the scale is the AdLib card. This half-height card has 11 polyphonic voices and uses sounds based on FM synthesis. You have a choice of 145 sounds, played as either six melody and five percussion or nine melody and two percussion. The AdLib card comes with a large stereo headphone socket which doubles as a speaker output (with adapter), in-built amplifier and volume control. Such built-in facilities are worth quite a bit.

When bought, the card comes complete with lots of software and manuals. We first reviewed the PC AdLib card back in Issue 23 of TGM, so take a look at that month's mag for more information.

The AdLib is the best supported card of the three reviewed here. I counted 51 companies who are now committed to supporting the card — and that didn't even include any from the UK! The AdLib certainly has the most support for software currently available.

Sound quality is very good. Both top- and mid-ranges are good, but slightly less impressive than the Games Blaster. However, the bass compensates for this as it is well defined, producing a credible range of percussion effects, including deep bass sounds. The overall sound production is an improvement over the Games Blaster, being far more balanced in all departments.

MicroProse have recently decided to concentrate on the AdLib. In fact they have become so taken with the beast that there are possibilities of them taking a more active interest in the AdLib. Watch this space.

CONTACT: **Electrone, Haywood House, High Street, Pinner, Middlesex HA5 5QA. Tel: (01) 4292433.**

GAMES BLASTER

Creative Labs/DLL £137.95

Filling the 'budget' slot is the Games Blaster from Creative Labs (distributed by DLL in the UK). The half-height Blaster card has a total of 12 polyphonic voices. Stereo sound effects can be taken from a preset batch of 32 instruments (each stereo channel can pan left or right). As well as a built-in amplifier you have speaker sockets, volume control and a 3.5mm headphone socket. You also receive a music program and a free copy of Silpheed from Sierra, a rather nifty shoot-'em-up.

As the card is new, support at the moment is low. However, software houses that are already pledging future support include Sierra, Lucasfilm, Mindscape, Electronic Arts, Cinemaware, Accolade, Origin, Activision and Omnitrend. Many UK companies are also taking an interest. At the moment only Omnitrend's Universe 3 and one or two Sierra titles support the card. However, there are four drivers supplied which can be loaded into King's Quest IV, Leisure Suit Larry II, Police Quest II and Space Quest III.

Overall sound quality is good. The mid-range and upper treble areas are well defined. However, the lower bass reproduction is not so good, with deeper bass even poorer. I am not too sure if this is a deficiency of the card or just inexperienced programming — only time will tell.

CONTACT: DLL, 5 St John's Road, Sandown, Isle of Wight. Tel: (0983) 405655.

GAME BLASTER
PC MUSIC BOARD
CREATIVE LABS

sound barrier

chip. A three-voice synthesiser with sound effects. The support that is given to the Innovation is limited. MicroProse have produced some drivers for the card, although they're limited, and due to present developments support may dwindle. In all, a bit of a duffer on the support front and a product of yesterday's technology.

Then there is the new sound card from IBM. Very nice, but vastly overpriced for its capabilities, and with minimal support from Sierra. I have also heard of Sierra giving some support for a Casio sound module — forget it, you can achieve superior sound capabilities and better support from one of my big three.

Right, now the debris has been swept aside, the following three boards can be chosen with confidence as they are all recommended. Each falls neatly into a price bracket with a relative quality of sound capability. Most importantly, however, each card can be easily obtained in this country and, if it doesn't already have good software support, it soon will have.

Hopefully, we will see a gradual reduction in prices as sound card availability and support increases in the UK. The software houses in the States already give good support to sound cards, it is only a matter of time before UK PC coverage as a whole follows suit. For example, I know that Populous will support various cards and that the Bitmap Brothers are very interested in the Roland card. Imagine, Xenon 2 in glorious, 256-colour VGA with the Roland card blasting away. It wouldn't be comparable to an arcade version — it would be better!

I believe we have seen the maturing of the PC sound card, with the above three products, to a point where they can no longer be ignored by PC games players and, in particular, computer magazines. Which is why from next month whenever I look at a PC version of a game in the Adventure/RPG/Strategy column, I will report on any sound card support it has and how it performs. In addition, I will keep you fully abreast of the PC sound market. No other computer journal offers such support, so PC owners make a regular date with TGM!

LAPC-1

Roland £379.00

Make way for the Rolls-Royce of sound cards, the Roland LAPC-1. The LAPC-1 is basically a CM-32L sound module in card form, so it produces a similar quality sound to the Roland D-series LA synthesisers. It is a full-length card, has a 3.5mm headphone socket (which runs off a fixed volume that can be software controlled), speaker sockets (you will need an external amp) and a (very useful) in-built MIDI interface. As Roland produce the industry standard — and very expensive — PC MIDI interface this is quite an addition.

The LAPC-1, which uses Roland's own LA synthesis sounds, is a multi-timbral unit with the ability to produce eight different instruments at once. It has 32 polyphonic voices, 128 preset sounds, 32 percussion sounds and a wide range of effects (thunder, laser-gun, door, etc). Complicated stereo-imaging can be developed too.

Roland
LAPC-1
LA SOUND CARD

Support at the moment is fairly limited, although Sierra (again) are giving it comprehensive support. Roland say we should see all of the major US software houses (Electronic Arts, Activision, etc) writing for it in the next couple of months as the LAPC-1 is already 'taking off' over there. Roland also mentioned that they are in the middle of talking to many UK companies; Ocean and Psygnosis were two names that cropped up. As for the sound quality? Well, it really is jaw-dropping stuff. I've never heard such high quality sounds from a computer game in all my life. Loading up Space Quest III and playing it through the Roland was an experience that left me speechless. The price is high as you might expect, but for such quality it's a gift.

CONTACT: Roland (UK), West Cross Centre, Brentford, Middlesex, TW8 9EZ. Tel: (01) 5684578.

SMART CARDS

Imagitec are currently writing the AdLib driver for MicroProse's Weird Dreams PC conversion. The only other examples of AdLib music that Imagitec had heard emanated from the Sierra adventures. However, according to Lee Garnet of Imagitec: 'I don't think they [Sierra] use it to its full capabilities. As support a variety of sound boards, they use common data for the AdLib, Roland and so on. So they are not writing for the specific qualities of each board. That's what it sounds like. The AdLib has not been pushed yet.'

The one drawback with both the Games Blaster and AdLib is the lack of good sampled sound effects (the Roland has them in abundance). However, I do know that the AdLib can digitise speech. MicroProse's F-15 Strike Eagle II has speech synthesis which exclaims things like 'Good Shot!' and informs you of take-off manoeuvres. The AdLib should be able to digitise other effects but the quality is suspect. According to Lee Garnet the AdLib 'cannot access the sampled data quick enough'. So, for comparison purposes with other computers, the Games Blaster and AdLib boards produce 'computer music' comparable to the Amiga (in some areas superior), they are a big improvement over the ST, but both cards have problems with sampled sound. As for the Roland? Well, it makes many arcade machines sound a bit tinny!

However, an interesting development is on the horizon. A card which can emulate both the 12 voices of the Games Blaster and the 11 voices of the AdLib and has full capabilities for sampled sound. Coming for around £200 it will be distributed by DLL, the Games Blaster distributors in the UK. Known in the States as The Killer Kard, it will probably be renamed the Sound Blaster for the UK. It should arrive with a full set of digitised sounds and special effects as well as 23 synthesised voices. You will also be able to digitise sounds and speech via a microphone socket (which includes compression algorithms to save memory). Features will include stereo output with amplifier, microphone jack, analogue joystick port and MIDI interface. DLL tell me that this card will be released around Christmas time.

It certainly looks formidable, especially as it will take advantage of the large amount of support for the two emulated cards. Dedicated drivers are already being written. An updated version of Lucasfilm's Indiana Jones — The Graphic Adventure will contain speech from the man himself! Can't wait...

READERPAGE

There's no Star Letter this month. This is due to the simple fact that none of the letters were quite up to scratch. So let's all make a concerted effort to improve them next month. (Less of the computer vs computer/sexism/violence/where's the Konix crap. Something a bit more original perhaps?) After those Thank You letters you'll be writing on Boxing Day, you'll be glad to let loose with some truthful observations of what's going on around you. Why not tell us about 'classic cock-ups' you received for Christmas — like the wrong format of computer software or Powerdrome instead of Power Drift. Write to TGM with all your festive cheer at: **Readerpage, TGM, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.** And remember, there's ■ humungous £50 pounds worth of software to be won every month. Just think what that could buy you...

Pirated software is better

Dear TGM
I find it sad to think that pirated software is often better quality than bought software While it is all the same software, pirated stuff often has cheat modes which can add a lot to a game. Even worse, there is nothing to stop a manufacturer putting the same sort of thing in.

A few examples of games ■ which the cheat modes have saved me from wanting to lynch the author would be Amiga versions of Virus, Blood Money, Super Hang-On as well as many others. The problem is that some of these games are too hard, at least for a person of my limited zapping abilities.

Options rather than cheats would be a good idea. Interceptor has a free-flight mode, why couldn't Test Drive II have an option ■ have no other cars on the road?

One of the main advantages of computer games is that you can play them whenever you like, without the hassle of going to the local arcade. Why not play it HOW you like as well as whenever you like? The idea is not to be ideologically pure and not cheat, but to enjoy the game and relax.
Thomas Farmer, Wellington, NEW ZEALAND.

There's no way that TGM can condone piracy under any circumstances It's killing the industry, and as such is bad for anyone interested in games at all ends of the spectrum. This includes the buyer. Why do you think 16-bit software is so expensive — companies aren't going ■ lose money second time around.

As regards customising software, there's two things to consider. 1) It's okay if you've bought the original product in the first place. Just like a car has spoilers added to it or a sunroof fitted. 2) Once the new version is given to someone else, thus creating another copy from the original, ■ is pirated! If you want ■ version like someone else's then go buy your own original and get somebody to customise it for you. Even better, learn machine code and write your own game. That way you can blame no-one but yourself.

However, it's an interesting fact that most 16-bit games now have a built-in cheat. It's just ■ case of waiting a month or so for it to appear in a magazine. Most programmers put cheats in to help playtesting. It's not a case of software houses banning such things. (Usually they have very little idea at all what's really in the game.) 16-bit games are slowly getting nearer consoles, where all games have cheats — if only we could understand the Japanese sense of humour!

Get rich quick

Dear TGM
I've found a brilliant way of making a living! In fact I've found two!
WAY ONE (The Hard Way)
1) Become a programming genius (This may take a bit ■ time and effort, but persevere.)
2) Write a game.
3) Make squillions.
4) Live ■ up.
5) Die (Optional if you're a god from Populous, as many people writing to Readerpage seem to be.)
WAY TWO (The Easy Way)
1) Start a software house.
2) Transform a brilliant coin-op into a totally naff game.
3) Hype ad infinitum.
4) See point 3) of Way One to end...

I was just about to patent Way Two when I discovered that US Gold had already used it for OUT RUN! Bother!

Oh, and I noticed a nasty mistake in one of your early issues At the top of the Mercy Dash cartoon the word Humour was written — for no apparent reason. Nasty error, that.

Now onto the subject of 'My computer's better than yours'. I'm sick of it. Myself, I've got a Casio calculator and that blows the Commoblocky and the Spectrouble out of the water. Why aren't more games released for this brilliant machine? Its graphic and sound potential's out of this world! And don't say it's too old, just think how many are still being sold! Please increase coverage or I might be forced to upgrade to a turnip.

Confirmation! There IS a Casio virus. It's called Chicken Pox. I think I picked it up in a bucket from a Public Domain hamburger. Is dipping your calculator in a bucket of creosote a possible cure? Can any other Casio users out there help me?
The Mutant Ninja

New USA correspondent

Dear Sir
I bring the latest news (or rumours at least!) from the States, a land where consoles rule unchallenged. Although the hand-held mimics are now selling well and the desk-consoles are still dictating the course of life for nearly 20 million American yuppie maniacs. Prototypes of the keyboardless STE (note the E) and the Commodore Nephew (basically an Amiga 500, but otherwise same as the Atari with a different cart/disk format) are due for presentation real soon now and so is the successor to the PC Engine (the originally named PS Engine). It's rumoured to have graphical capabilities similar to the Parsec!

The Mega Drive and Famicom are also selling like hot cakes and there are about 300 titles available per machine (long live NTSC!). Maybe the Multi System is the hot stuff in the UK but just wait and see the PS Engine's fully tilting home cabinet with 12 stereo sound channels, 2 3-D holographic displays (!!!), three megabytes of V-RAM memory and working joygloves!! (But it costs an equivalent of nearly £600.) By the way, the games (including Operation Whirlwind — Wolf Part 3!!!) come on a laser disk and cost about £50 each. The unit itself will sell for about 350/400 more (meaning a 1000 pounds home arcade hall).

The official launch is sometime in early 1990 — can't wait to see it!
Bob Linn, Cogney Park, Gotham (just kidding).

Ah. Another correspondent on the East Coast. Just what TGM needs.

BakedBeanSandwich, Poynton, Cheshire.

What's this? Another Casio calculator user. Perhaps support is growing faster than we thought (particularly in Cheshire...). It's obviously a machine to keep an eye on. All you need now's a game and you'll have taken over the MSX market share.

As for the Get Rich Quick idea, we don't think US Gold are the only ones to have tried it.

Protect ninjas...

Dear TGM

Right! I'm a stonkin' 'ard mega ninja from Cheshire. I'm so hard I haven't just got a black belt with 2nd Dan, I've got a pyschedelic rainbow belt with two Andrews and three Michaels. So there. I've got some moans about computer games...

1) Us ninjas are sick of being portrayed as crudely animated, crummy little sprites. Let's see some decent ninjas doing some REAL Double Side Kicks of the Mutant Golden Ninja Gerbil.

2) We're sick of all this 'My computer's better than your computer' stuff. Personally, I've got a Casio calculator and its graphic and sound potential blows everything else out of the water! Let's see some more reviews for this brilliant, up-and-coming games machine, instead of all these PC Engine no-hopers.

3) A bit of technical stuff now. Are there any plans to release Operation Wolf or Chase HQ on the Philips Microwave? Why is it that no coin-op conversions ever come out for it? Why is it always games with really boring titles like Roast Lamb and Baked Potato?

The Well 'Ard Ninja, Poynton, Cheshire. (Near where Captain Blood hangs out.)

Ha! You're sick of this 'My computer's better than your computer' stuff. There we were, just four months ago, thinking 'Right that's settled it, the Amiga's the best' when along should come the STE. Two days later, of course, we saw the spec and dismissed it as under-powered and over-priced — not to mention too later. Then a week on, we received the Archimedes A3000 in the office. After a few days we were dumbfounded — but satisfied. As far as we're concerned, the Archie has it. So we'll have less of this 'My computer's better...' rubbish till a new computer comes out. Okay!

Interesting machine, the Philips Microwave. It's sold loads of units, has great distribution — it's in all the high street stores —, yet it's still not got the support of software companies. Although an increasing number of frozen food manufacturers are showing an interest — adapting their products specifically for the Philips. Anyhow, I'd prefer a microwaved pizza to a game of Pac-Man any day. Why play the game when you can do it for real!

Kick Off ruined my life

Dear TGM

Hi to all you Commie people out there in readerland!!!

Here's some odd little facts about Kick Off for all you Commodore 64 users.

On entering the League Competition, you start off with flair and skill, you take on seven other teams. You win some, draw some and disappointingly lose some. But then on game 15 you find you're in the lead by one point, with Italy closing in fast and only one game to go — you must win the last match.

You win your match and find out that it's not over after all. You have to play another match, then another and another. STOP!!! No, it goes on and on ... you have entered the Twilight Zone.

You are in a neverending league, you start the game as a young boy and finish as an old, decrepit man.

You win again and again, but still you never reach the top of the league. And do you know why? No! After your testimonial hundredth match, the number played goes back to zero. Aaarrggh. And similar with the number of points.

Kick Off is a good footie game, but what good's a footie game when you can never win the league. This game could be the death of you — it could wipe out a nation.

Definitely not a game to play when you hear the five minute warning.

Michael Jones, Birmingham.

PS: If you press the letter Q at the start of the match you will draw automatically without even kicking the ball.

You have nothing but our sincerest sympathy — especially with the Commodore 64 version. We've been playing the Amiga version since it arrived in the office, and have come to the conclusion that it must be the most bugged game of the year. However, on the Amiga version it only adds to the fun of game. After all, football's a funny old game...

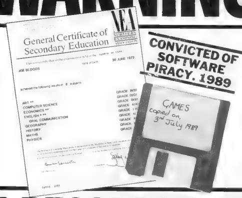
UNCLE MEL'S TRIVIA QUIZ

1) What is a teraflop?
2) Who has admitted to computer addiction on her latest album: a) Siouxsie, b) Kate Bush, c) Dolly Parton?
3) Which six-inch hero has recently become a computer convert?
4) In which year was the 3.5-inch disk drive launched, and by whom?
5) Which Russian sci-fi movie predicted the legacy of Chernobyl, and which US movie predicted the Three Mile Island disaster?
6) Apart from being a geriatric rock star, which software house does Neil Young inhabit?
7) What's unusual about the rubbish bins on Wrexham town centre?
8) Why are Level 9 quitting adventures, and why are Psygnosis quitting 16-bit?
9) In Egghead's Robot, a computerised robot duplicate is made of a human. Who played both parts: a) Linda Lovelace, b) Mel Gibson, c) Keith Chegwin,?
10) What does Mitsubishi translate as?
11) Name at least four software houses named after wildlife.
12) When was solar power first used for children's games console: a) 1965, b) 1888, c) 1615?
13) What's the difference between extracting a fossil and Jeff Minter?
14) In which Dragonware adventure does Ham Burger star?
15) Name the disc jockey and the Olympic athlete recently exploited in Commodore promotions.
16) Please give the answer to the following little sum, 1989 minus two million equals...
17) What scrambled titles are in these unsavoury lavatories: Loo Sup Up, Shyter's Props, Slang Digs Hot Bogs?
18) What is unrealistic about the two world championship contenders featured on the cover of Goliath's Boxing Manager?

ANSWERS

1) One million million instructions per second, or any game for the MSX.
2) Kate Bush.
3) Sooty.
4) 1982, by Sony.
5) Stalker, The China Syndrome.
6) Imagitec.
7) They are computerised, solar-powered and feature a voice chip!
8) Lack of profit due to disinterest and piracy.
9) Keith Chegwin.
10) The formal grouping of three water chestnuts together in one place.
11) Bug-Byte, Eidersoft, Firebird, Llamasoft, Rainbird, Red Rat, Sandpiper.
12) 1615.
13) One's mined out of its stone, the other's, aah, zarjaz man.
14) Ooze.
15) David Jensen, Tessa Sanderson.
16) Activision.
17) Populous, Hypersports, Ghost 'n' Goblins.
18) They're white.

WARNING



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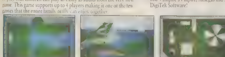


Amiga versions shown here

Robin Candy's PLAYING TIPS

New Year soon, [illegible], [illegible], the old [illegible] fragments. What more could you ask for? Except maybe a can of lemon [illegible] or some new ski gloves (and hat). We're getting very festive in the office now. Mark has taken to wearing tinsel and [illegible] [illegible] like a [illegible], while [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible].

But enough of the [illegible] banter, what have we got? Games I'm particularly looking for [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], Ghouls 'n' Ghosts, North and South and [illegible] — ie, anything new and [illegible] a bugger to play!

Tusker
(C64)

Here's the third and final installment of tips for System 3's romp in the jungle.

Collect the small, gold nuggets found on the start screens (there are seven all together). Before collecting the nugget from the water, use the slingshot to kill the dinosaur. Enter the cave in the side of the mountain and move right until you reach the temple entrance. Now punch the monkey with the nuggets and it should move back.

Hit the statue in the temple to collect the water. Then kick the door on the insect screen to release a spider. After the insects have disappeared, collect the icon from the floor of the room.

Now, collect the icon from the room with the large plant in it (beware, you cannot kill the plant!). Then collect the hammer, chisel and plank from the next room. Use the hammer and chisel and hit the altar in the room with the mummy and the lid should open to reveal a brown icon. Collect this icon and enter the room with the empty table. Experiment placing the icons in different orders on the table. When you've found the correct order, a door will open into the final screens. Place the plank across the chasm. Walk across the plank into the final set of screens (the Elephant's Graveyard is only a stone's throw away now!). Place the gold nuggets on the scales to stop them moving, which in turn opens the final door. Go through this door to complete the game.

There is a cheat mode which works on all levels. Move to the bottom right-hand corner of the first screen on each level. Then put the joystick in port one and press fire. You will now be transported to the last screen of the level with all objects held.

Mike Tyson's Punch Out
(Nintendo)

[illegible] O'Toole, London.

Enter code 007 353 5963 to jump straight to the fight with big Mike himself.

Galaga 88
(PC Engine)

Stephen Bascombe, High Wycombe

If the game is getting too easy for you, push up and press the RUN button when on the title screen. You will be presented with a much harder game.

Trojan
(Nintendo)

Derek Wong, Surrey

UNDERGROUND ROOMS

Level 1, Part 1: There are three mice hidden on the wall at the top-left corner — 3000 points.

Level 1, Part 2: A powerup is hidden on the wall to the right-hand side.

LEVEL MONSTERS

Level 1, Part 1: Run straight to the Hatchet Brother on the right and kill him. Then jump towards the next Hatchet Brother till you are close enough to kill him.

Level 1, Part 2: Use the shield as protection against Iron Arms' arms. Hit him when he is close enough, then put the shield back on immediately, run back and wait for another chance to hit him.

Level 2, Part 1: When Armadillon rolls towards you, jump and wait for him to stand up. Then use the shield to deflect any fire and hit him once. Now go backwards and repeat the process till he's dead.

Level 3, Part 1: Edge towards Muscleman and hit him with the tip of your sword then retreat immediately to avoid any retaliation. Repeat this until he's dead.

Level 3, Part 2: A really nasty level. You have to fight a Trojan with exactly the same weapons as you. So use a mixture of techniques learned on the previous levels. Once you've killed him you've only got another four levels to wade through.

Operation Wolf
(Amiga)

Someone who signs themself simply as Vark sent in the following listing which will equip you with 20 ammunition magazines and 20 grenades. First, turn off your Amiga for ten seconds then turn it back on. Load Amiga Workbench, then AmigaBASIC. Now type in the listing and save it to disk for future use. Then run the program and follow the onscreen instructions.

```
10 REM OPERATION WOLF CHEAT
20 CHECK=0
30 CHEAT=520192&
40 FOR N=CHEAT TO 520314& STEP 2
50 READ A£
60 A=VAL ("&H"+A$)
70 CHECK=CHECK+A
80 POKEW N,A
90 NEXT N
100 IF CHECK <> 573736& THEN PRINT "ERROR IN DATA!": END
110 CALL CHEAT
120 PRINT: PRINT "PLEASE INSERT OPERATION WOLF DISK 1 IN DFO:"
130 PRINT: PRINT "NOW RESET YOUR AMIGA AND OPERATION WOLF"
140 PRINT: PRINT "WILL NOW LOAD WITH CHEAT OPERATING!"
```

Battlehawks 1942

(All formats)

SN Hardy from Sheffield has earned himself £50 of free software and a TGM T-shirt for this comprehensive playing guide to the excellent Battlehawks 1942.

1) The promotions awarded during the game for successful completion of a mission are cadet (America only), Ensign, Lieutenant Junior (Japan only), Lieutenant, Lieutenant Commander and Commander. Japanese pilots are more likely to be promoted than the Americans.

2) Learn to fly the planes of both sides effectively before embarking on any missions. Japanese planes are armed with a 20mm cannon and are very manoeuvrable. However, their armour is weaker than the American planes.

3) Bombers are difficult to destroy because they fly in tight formations. Attacking from the side leaves them vulnerable but this is not always possible. One good tactic is to fly behind and slightly below the enemy plane. If you are positioned correctly the enemy plane's rear gun will not be able to revolve low enough to fire back and you can destroy the enemy at will. The downside of using this tactic is that some planes fly very low and it's difficult to get into the correct position.

4) Torpedo attacks generally do more damage than dive bombing. The Japanese torpedos are more effective than the American ones – a carrier will normally sink after just three direct hits. Try to launch a torpedo as close to the target as possible to inflict even more damage.

5) Destroy the enemy Combat Air Patrol before starting your bombing missions. During this time your fellow pilots will eliminate some of the enemy vessels. If they score hits, all the better, because this will boost your own chances of promotion. They may even complete the mission for you in which case you should aim your warhead at one of the escorting destroyers. Another advantage is that burning vessels fire less (or no) flak, so you will have an easier time during your attack.

6) Japanese pilots try kamikaze suicide attacks against allied shipping. These are more likely to occur if a) the Japanese have suffered heavy casualties early on in the mission or b) they have missed with their warheads. Sometimes a Japanese pilot, if his plane is badly damaged, will aim at a ship before bailing out.

When playing as the Japanese always try a kamikaze attack on your 16th mission just before retirement. Try and aim your plane at an aircraft carrier because these are easier to dive onto. You will also receive more points during a mission if several ships are damaged.

7) If a mission is going badly, dive towards the ocean then fly towards any nearby ship, even an enemy ship. They will fire every available gun at you and although you will have to run the gauntlet of flak so will any enemy aircraft that dare follow you. As the flak guns are very inaccurate, there is a good possibility that they will destroy their own aircraft.

8) A good way to dive quickly is to start your descent as normal and then switch to the rear gunner's screen. The altimeter will now spin like crazy, many times faster than the normal rate. Remember to pull up before hitting the sea. This tactic always works when flying level. So you can easily catch up with distant enemy planes. However, if you try climbing, the plane will just stall.

```
150 END
160 DATA 41FA, 001E, 227C, 0007, FF50, 303C, 0019, 22D8
170 DATA 51C8, FFFC, 23FC, 0007, FF50, 0000, 0068, 4E75
180 DATA 48E7, C006, 4BFA, 0022, 2D4D, 002E, 4BEE, 0022
190 DATA 7016, D25D, 51C8, FFFC, 4641, 3D41, 0052, 4CDF
200 DATA 6003, 4E73, 4E71, 4E71, 48E7, 0006, 2C79, 0000
210 DATA 0004, 42AE, 002E, 4BFA, 000E, 23CD, 0000, 0068
220 DATA 4CDF, 6000, 4E75, 33FC, 0014, 0003, 6F58, 33FC
230 DATA 0014, 0003, 6F56, 4EF9, 00FC, 0CA6
```

Ikari Warriors

(Nintendo)

Alexander Swift, Loughton.

To continue the game once you have lost all of your lives just press buttons A and B continuously till the game restarts.

New Zealand Story

(Spectrum)

Mark Saunders, London

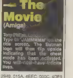
On the title screen type in 'FLUFFY' and the word cheat will appear onscreen. You will now have infinite lives.

Pac-Mania

(Amiga)

Another program from the mysterious Vark. Use the same procedure as the Operation Wolf POKE to get the program working.

```
10 REM PACMANIA CHEAT
20 CHECK=0
30 CHEAT=523776&
40 FOR N=CHEAT TO 5238628 STEP 2
50 READ A$
60 A=VAL ("&H"+A$)
70 CHECK=CHECK+A
80 POKEW N,A
90 NEXT N
100 IF CHECK <> 251583& THEN PRINT "ERROR IN DATA!" END
110 PRINT PRINT "PLEASE INSERT PACMANIA DISK IN DF0"
120 PRINT PRINT "AND PRESS A KEY" PRINT
130 K$=INKEY$ IF K$="" THEN 130
140 PRINT "DO YOU WANT UNLIMITED LIVES (PRESS U"
150 PRINT "OR ...... JUST 10 LIVES (PRESS T)"
160 C$=INKEY$. IF C$ <> "T" AND C$ <> THEN 160
170 IF C$="T" THEN POKEW 523846&,10
180 IF C$="U" THEN POKEW 523854&,7737
190 CALL CHEAT
200 DATA 2C79, 0000, 0004, 207C, 00FE, 88C0, 43F9, 0007
210 DATA F000, 303C, 0145, 12D8, 51C8, FFFC, 22FC, 0BFC
220 DATA 0000, 22FC, 007E, 4E5D, 328C, 4E75, 4EB9, 0007
230 DATA F01A, 41FA, 000A, 2948, 015A, 4EEC, 000C, 4DF9
240 DATA 0000, 4C00, 33FC, 0005, 0000, D220, 33FC, 5339
250 DATA DATA 0000, D34E, 4ED6, 0000
```



Batman — The Movie

(Amiga)

Tony Phillips, London

Type in 'JAMMMMM' on the title screen. The Batman logo will then flip upside indicating that the cheat mode has been activated. You will now have infinite lives.

Enduro Racer

(Sega)

J Beard, Northolt

On the title screen, roll the joypad clockwise then anticlockwise to select the start level.

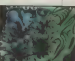
Shadow of the Beast

(Amiga)

R Farrington, Wirral.

Load the game as usual and then when the Beast logo appears hold down the joystick fire button and the left mouse button until asked to insert disk two. When the game has finished loading you will have infinite lives.

We know everyone else has printed this too, but, hey, you don't read any other mags, do you?



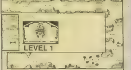
Mr Heli

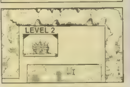
(C64)

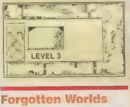
Ian and Mark Stuttard from Manchester sent in the maps for all three levels of Mr Heli. If you're having problems progressing through the first level you could always skip straight to the other levels with maximum weapons and lives using these codes.

Level 2: CAAEIEAAAUABHGADCKBX

Level 3: DAAGJHCAAUAEGAADCFCU







Space Quest 3

(All formats)

Simon Maizels, Surrey.

Look at the screen then clock on the navigation system. Set a course for Phleebut. Click on light speed. Once in orbit click on land. Now go to the back of the ship and push button. If at any time in the desert you find a Scorpazoid, walk off the screen then go back. Whatever you do, don't go south from the start position because you will be eaten. Go east, north, north, east and enter the building. You will now be in the World of Wonders. Select 'show gem' and haggle with the salesmen until you are offered around 425 buckazoids. Buy the underwear then leave. You will now encounter the Terminator. Go west and into the foot. Then walk into the elevator and push up. Walk upstairs and over to the nearside pulley. Make sure you are facing right. When the Terminator is alongside the cogs, swing the pulley. Walk to the Terminator's remains and take the belt. Now go down the elevator with Fester then go south, west, south and go into the ship. Go to the pilot's ship and look at the screen, then the engines. Now take off and look at the screen again, click on the navigation system and set a course for Monolith Burgers then switch to light speed.

Once in Monolith Burgers, walk west to the Astro Chicken arcade machine. Look at the machine and insert a buckazoid. Every time you land you get five points. Keep playing until the game refuses to award you with anymore points, then walk over to the employee behind the counter and order a fun meal. Pay the employee. Walk to an empty cubicle and eat your food. Now walk back to your ship and enter through hatch. Set course for Ortega. Once you have landed, move to the back of the ship and wear underwear then push the button. Go south, west, then proceed carefully south across the rocks. Wait for the men to leave, then walk over to the crate and take the detonator. Go east, east, north up the volcano, north towards the machine, west down the steps, up and around to the east. Now walk over to the ladder in the middle of the screen and climb up it. Walk to the rim and throw the detonator. Climb down, then go west, south, south, south, west then west again. Walk to the anemometer and take the pole. Go north, use the pole then go east then north to the ship. Take off and set course for Pestulon.

Forgotten Worlds

(All formats)

Hon Cho Shing from Huddersfield.

ONE PLAYER MODE

General

1) When you start, earn at least 4800 zennies and buy all the items in the shop except the newspaper.

2) Always get the other player to do all the dirty work, like the fighting. On the parameceum get your man behind the other player so that the bullets don't hit you.

3) Set the other fighter to autofire but remember to switch it off before you enter the shop.

4) Buy the multi-cannon for the other guy.

Weapons

1) V-cannon — very useful especially with a booster.

2) Laser — very powerful but terribly slow

■ Multi—directional — good when lizards are coming at you from all angles

4) Armour doesn't do much. So if you haven't got the zennies to spare don't buy it

■ Booster — brilliant, buy this for your weapon as soon as possible

Indiana Jones

— The Action Game

Ben Isaacs, Cardiff

Hold down F, I, S and H keys on the title screen then use keys 1 to 4 to advance through the different levels.

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PBM UPDATE

What's all this about PBM Pubmeets? Just an excuse for a load of overweight hippies to have a booze-up. Or could it possibly be they're seriously talking PBM. Nah, it's a good excuse... as JohnWoods finds out

One of the most enjoyable parts of PBM is meeting other players.So I've started off this issue by giving a rundown of pubmeetsacross the country..

The London Pubmeet ■ the largest in the country, usually pullingover 100 players and GMs. I attend every month and can be spottedsigning autographs, and generally being mobbed by the millions.It ■ takes place ■ the Leicester Arms off Regent's Street onthe first Friday of every month.

The Horse Meet is held in Shrewsbury on the third Friday night ofevery month, at 8pm in the White Horse pub (by the column). Thisevent is usually attended by four or more keen PBMers.

CONTACT: Rob Winrow, 1 Twyford's Way, The Chilterns, Shrewsbury,Shropshire SY2 5XN.

The Glasgow Pubmeet is held on the first Friday ■ the month,starting around 7:30pm. The event takes place in the Ailsa Bar,Glasgow Central Hotel (in Glasgow central station). Currentlyaround a dozen players meet, mainly from Whitegold, Crusade,Legacy of the Panther and Epic.

CONTACT: Whitegold Games, PO Box 47, Ayr, KA7 4RZ.

COMPANY PROFILE: Camelot Games

Welsh company, Camelot Games started around two years ago with ahand-moderated sports game. Called Rugby League Challenge (well,they do come from Wales), it offers players the chance to getinvolved at a relatively low cost (95p a turn) in a fairlyinvolved sports game. Since those days, Camelot have graduallyincreased their range of games, now offering a full five games.All are hand-moderated sports games, and offer exceptional valuefor money.

Along with Rugby League Challenge, Soccer Six is a PBM version ofthe popular indoor game, featuring player ages, ratings, banks,awards, pools, cup competitions and a full five divisions. Costis 75p a turn with Camelot's usual free start-up. Similarly,World Cup Manager revolves around a larger footballing arena andcosts 70p.

Other games in the Camelot range are The Derby, a horse racingsimulation, and Gladiator School, where you train ■ be numberone in the Roman arena! Turns in both are 80p.

CONTACT: Camelot Games, Cae Ymryson, Caernarvon, Gwynedd LL552LR.

Something for everyone!

Sloth Enterprises are extending their range of games with a USimport entitled Kings and Things. The game is played ■ themythical land of Kadab, which ■ split into a 12x12 grid ofsquares. Each ■ these squares represents a province which can becaptured by one of 20 players. Players begin as minor rulers andmust aim ■ become King! Starting with just one capital squareand two armies this ■ tough going.

Each army can recruit Things to increase their strength. Thingsare wild and whacky creatures, each with an offensive anddefensive strength. Examples of Things include Killer Penguins,and stone golems! As you may have gathered Kings and Things isplayed with a certain air of humour, and together with theinvolving tactics makes great fun.

CONTACT: Sloth Enterprises, PO Box 82, Southampton, SO9 7FQ.

The British PBM Association (BPBMA) is aiming to begin a PBMCompanies Organisation, with aims such as joint advertising topromote the hobby. Before the Sheffield Convention, a ratherturbulent meeting took place and the BPBMA have now set up aworking party to look at the structure of such an organisation inmore detail.

The BPBMA have also announced the date for the 5th LondonConvention. It ■ to be held on Saturday March 17 1990 at the OldHorticultural Hall, Vincent Square, London SW1. Doors open at10am. This is likely to be the biggest event ever in PBM and is areal must for anyone in the area. Virtually all the PBM companiesare likely to attend, as well as the annual awards, quizzes,discussions, seminars, demos, bars, guest appearances, and abring and buy auction! Tickets are £3, or ■ in advance.

CONTACT: The BPBMA (TGM), 55 Eden Road, London E17 9JX

Starmagic III is the latest release from Whitegold games. Thegame is computer-moderated, and puts you ■ charge of ■ spaceempire. Each turn you must explore further regions, trade,adventure and conquest your way across the galaxy. There are noset victory conditions to the game. You cannot win in the sameway you might win a game of chess. Instead, your aims areself-determined — perhaps you may aim to become military Warlord,Merchant Prince, Pirate Lord, Master Diplomat, InformationBroker, Revolutionary — the choice ■ yours!

Costs to the game are quite high, with the £6 set-up getting youthe comprehensive 50-page rulebook and first turn. Moves thencost £2.25 for up to 50 orders, with £1.50 for an extra 50 moves.

CONTACT: Whitegold Games, PO BOX 47, Ayr, KA7 4RZ

Yet another new space opera is Globemaster from Time Patterns.The company has an impressive background, having run Starglobefor over five years.

Globemaster runs on ■ 14-day turnaround. ■ puts you as leader ofa set of colonists on a starship exploring a new system. Firstyou must find ■ habitable planet and set up a colony, thendevelop, defend and expand your empire from there. Start-up feeis free, with further turns at £1.70 (which includes an SAE),with only other cost being the optional 50p colour starmaps.Looks to be the best value of the three new space operas,although may prove to have less depth.

CONTACT: Time Patterns, 97 Devonshire Road, Handsworth Wood,Birmingham, B20 2PG.

For American Football fans, the most successful game ■ thatmarket is Gameplan. The game offers three levels of play: basic,advanced and introductory. All include roster selection, team-building, training and cover a full season of competitive actionwith playoffs and draft pickings. Rules, two turns and leagueenrolments cost £4.

CONTACT: Sloth Enterprises, Freepost, Southampton SO9 1BH.

Finally, a new venture set up by Mike Richards, called the GiGreport, is available FREE ■ anyone who wants ■ hear about PBMin general. Issue zero ■ eight pages long and includes a lengthyand well-written explanation of PBM. For your free copy just sendan SAE with your request to: The Asylum, 92 Yarburgh Street,Whalley Range, Manchester M16 7ER.

John Woods, PBM, TGM, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.

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Amiga contacts wanted: If your last, and like only good stuff, then forget the rest! Write to the best: Mark, 34 Berwick Crescent, Sidcup, Kent DA15 8HR. Remember, strictly no lamers! Get writing now!!

Amiga contacts wanted from all over the world to swap games, demos, utilities. Write to Kenny, 62 Carrol Cr., Ormskirk, Lancs.L39 1PZ - for all latest stuff.

PC engine contacts wanted all over the world. 100% reply. Send to:- Noel Mitchell, 72A Trostan Ave, Ballymena, ■ Ireland BT437BL. Hi to Allen, Mutch, Rod and all my friends. Please send games list.

Amiga contacts wanted: to swap hints, tips etc. Fast reply guaranteed. Write to Jake Thornton, ■ St Joseph's Tle, Mell, Drogheda, Co. Louth, Eire or phone (Eire) 041 35719.

Amiga contacts wanted from all over the world. Reply guaranteed 100%. Write to: Bal, 144 Whalley New Road, Blackburn, Lancs. BB16LB or write to: Zulf, 100 Walnut Street, Blackburn, Lancs. BB16NU, UK. (Beginners helped).

Amiga contacts wanted. 100% same day reply. Send disks and lists to: Chris, 105 Hammond Drive, Darlington, County Durham DL15 5TL.

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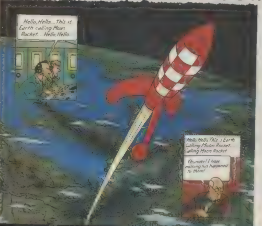
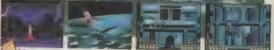


Hello, Hello... This is Earth calling Moon Rocket... Hello, Hello...
Hello, Hello. This is Earth Calling Moon Rocket... Calling Moon Rocket
Thunder! I hope nothing has happened to them!



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JANUARY 1990
VOL. 2

IMAGINATION Workshop

AMERICAN COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT

CONTENTS

The Imagination Workshop

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IMAGINATION *Workshop*

NEXT ON LINE

There are times when staying home in bed is the best defense. Join Bruce Willis as he makes life and death decisions in DIE HARD.

FROM BEHIND CLOSED DOORS

Atari's color LCD hand-held is nifty hardware and software. For a look into both, let's go to the source - the wild and wacky guys who created the LYNX.

PLUG IT IN:

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About the Cover:

The only kind of Head to be is a Computer Head. Digitised effects combine with conventional photography to create the look - patience does the rest. Created using a 35mm Maxxum camera, Digi-View Gold, Photon Paint, a Panasonic BxW video camera, and a digital special effects generator.

MESSAGE FROM THE MARSHAL:

EVOLUTION IS IN YOUR HANDS. More than just a catchy phrase, it's the fact when it comes to the new hand-held game consoles. They represent the freedom to leave old methods behind. In the same way that transistors junked vacuum tubes, so will the flat video screens replace the traditional monitors and t.v.'s now considered state of the art - one example being Hitachi's 7 pound stereo rechargeable VCR with all the features PLUS a pop-up 5" LCD color screen. Hey, new technology is inevitable, at least as long as ideas aren't forced to hold back due to marketing or self-appointed experts. Creativity is partly driven because the human condition doesn't stand still. Or maybe because girls (and guys) just wanna have fun. Oh - regarding the Cover date snafu from last time, it was all a ploy to enable us to celebrate our first anniversary with the second issue (any good excuse to throw a party...).

Marshal

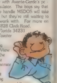
RUMORS & NEWS

Double Click Software (known for their great DC Formatter shareware program) are releasing their first commercial product for the ST - DC UTILITIES. Retailing for $29.95, the five programs translate to less than $5.00 each. Inside you'll find a Squisher that reduces programs in size so they take less space and run quicker, two ARCing program extractors (one as a desk accessory), a way to customize desktop information files to use anytime, and a keystroke command system. Version 1.1 ■ enclosed in 1.0 packaging - the address hasn't changed, it's still Post Office Box 741206, Houston, Texas 77274. There's also talk of a new desktop replacement package, similar ■ concept to Neodesk, but requiring less memory and with "greater" compatibility to TOS.

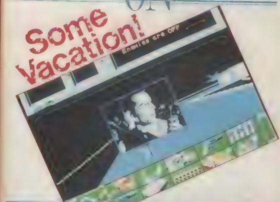
Midi musicians will want to check out Dr.T's upcoming MIDI-AX. Features will include the ability to modify and recall gestures in progress, all with easy mouse control. An unfinished version can ■ had for $99 (which can be applied later towards the final product still some ways off). Dr.T's can be found at 220 Boylston Street, suite 206 Chestnut Hill, Massachusetts 02167.

Virgin/Mastertronik U.S. is still plugging away at their arcade-oriented SILVER SURFER game. A big project - one programmer groans that "it isn't easy translating all those muscles onto fast moving, action sprites!"

Intersect's ST partitioning product, REVOLVER, is scheduled for an update to include parallel use with Avante-Garde's pc - DITTO 2 IBM emulator. The boys say that writing the code to handle MSDOS will take about 15 minutes, but they're still waiting to get the board to work with. For more on Intersect, write to 2828 Clark Road, suite 10 Sarasota, Florida 34231.



Forget the Video Toaster for the moment. New Tek is releasing version 4.0 of Digi-View. Newest addition is the ability to do high-rez 4,096 color overscanning. To add to the mix, you can multi-task ■ and Digi-Paint: going directly into Paint as a super bit-map. The upgrade with manual will be $24.95.



Put yourself in Bruce Willis' shoes, er - make that bare feet. You're a New York cop visiting La-la land (Los Angeles) in the hopes of coming to terms with your estranged wife who's now a top exec of a large Japanese owned corporation. You enter amidst a Christmas holiday party of massive proportions, feeling completely out of place, out of touch. Her less than enthusiastic greeting doesn't help much either.

To this point, DIE HARD seems like a soap opera. Things change radically, however, when you go to the bathroom to wash up and start massaging your aching feet. As timing goes - it stinks, because this is when terrorists decide to enter and start ugly fun and games. They've got everybody wrapped up neat and tidy. The only Wild Card is you. Which means pretty terrible odds: a police 38 caliber revolver versus a bunch of deadly professionals, automatic weapons, and a room full of hostages. Where's RAMBO when you need him?

Digitised sound and images are taken from the film. Graphic accompaniment adds to the mix, with arcade action happening when you least expect it. Try to acquire better firepower, avoid being discovered, look for objects that might prove useful. Time is not an ally though, with the bad guys pursuing their defeat of the master computer so as to negate the access code and open the company's vault. Once they get the plunder they've come for, the hostages are expendable And you know what that means.

Forget the movie and live the reality. Attempt to not only stay alive - but take the terrorists out. As in violently. As in DEAD! This is not exactly the time for singing carols of Peace on Earth.

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FROM
BEHIND
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BABES IN SILICON LAND

This is gonna be strange. Here we are in Palo Alto, just 5 days after California has been hit by one of the worst Earthquakes of the last 70 years. Around us is a lot of stuff in less than great shape. We're heading for a nameless industrial complex, pronounced structurally sound, less than 25 miles from the epicenter - to meet the two guys responsible for the LYNX, Atari's LCD hand-held game console. We don't expect Dave Needle or R.J. Mical to behave. It's just not part of their nature - even though we've promised them the freedom to say whatever they feel like.

Before we let them loose, let's describe the two so you're prepared. Remember Laurel and Hardy from the movies? Or how about a beach ball lying next to a baseball bat? [illegible] is tall, and fixes you with a pervasive stare -you get the impression sometimes that he'd like to pop out his eyeballs and juggle them. Dave is more robust, closer to the Earth (i.e. shorter), with black hair that tries to defy gravity and reach orbit. Between the two, they developed the Amiga (Dave = hardware/RJ = software), which certainly was an achievement. One which they feel they've more than matched with LYNX.

"You know how we met?", blurts out Dave. "We were both working for Amiga - the privately owned company before Commodore bought them. I had gotten in with them because I saw what a neat machine they were thinking of. I've always built things - things that DID something, not just sat there. And always in hardware. I did an entire Star Trek-type game ALL in hardware - aargh! Anyway, after working in New York and then moving to California, I heard about their company and ran to join them. "It was a CES show in Chicago. [illegible] and I were setting up the booth, and getting sweaty and absolutely dirty. We needed some 'bits' to finish the wiring (making sure not to let the unions know), so off we headed for an electronics store. Along the way we discovered how similarly we thought about things. He was the first software guy I had ever met who had more than an inkling of the purpose of my work, which is building hardware platforms that you can launch software from."

[illegible] interrupts. "Yes, you see we both know the other end, both have worked in soft/hardware - but I could never get hardware guys to UNDERSTAND what I was doing. Dave couldn't get software guys to UNDERSTAND what the guts could handle. We found ourselves a great match."

"Yeh," interjects Dave, "but what I was gonna add is that we stopped at your house and saw your sister who was the girl of my dreams. And maybe hanging around the guy..."

"The two are getting a bit fidgety. We resort to Plan A, which involves rope, and they quiet down. "Two years ago," says Dave, "we were sitting in this nifty restaurant with Dave Morse (formerly head of Amiga), talking about new projects after our stint at Commodore. We came up with the idea of doing a hand-held, and of starting a company

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to do all the good stuff. But instead, we opted for going through Epyx, which sold it off to Atari.

"LYNX is a tough act to follow," notes RJ. "We really put it all in there. We had a developer's conference recently, and people stood up and cheered. They never saw a system that did the work for you like this one. Dave's hardware takes care of all the grunt work. It let's you concentrate on being creative."

"Not to forget RJ's software developing kit. It runs on the Amiga, with multi-tasking windows so you can pop between music and graphics and code at will. There's even a special debugger which hooks up to LYNX through the parallel port, and is also a hardware analyzer."

Nothing's wrong with this mutual admiration society, but weren't there ANY problems in getting the hand-held to kick over?

"We had a tough time with the display," groans Dave. "We tested and busted (all in the name of science, of course) all kinds of glass. They kept looking lousy. None of the Japanese companies would have anything to do with us. Then we found a new glass from Citizen, so new that they hadn't even used it in one of their t.v. products yet. We got along with these guys."

"We got along because Dave likes to get up and sing in those Japanese clubs where you lip-sync with the music."

"I thought it was because I'll eat anything placed in front of me!"

"It's kind of funny too," says RJ. "Dave has a hearing problem where he's affected by the low boom-boom bass in music, so he shys away from all but elevator tunes. That's why there's four-channel sound, but not stereo. He says he's not interested. That reflects on the way he sings. I guess the Japanese were amused."

A dirty look at RJ before Dave continues. "While we were able to get the glass problem dealt with - there were other features we wanted to include, but couldn't. Like an incremental control; an 'Accelerometer' that would eliminate the joystick altogether. You'd just tilt the entire unit to the left to make the car or plane go in that direction. Or up and down. But the parts cost too much, so away that went."

"The same with trying to do a video output - too expensive to produce," RJ points out.

Those fortunate to have previewed the unit (due out any time now) marvel at the quality and playability. Running at 16 MHz, on a 3 1/2" diagonal screen in 16 colors from a palette of 4,096, with unlimited sprite control - this ain't cheese! Big enough to grip securely and backlit to play with under the covers. With a double set of fire buttons and a 'Flip' mode for lefties. California Games comes with it, and it's nifty to watch the little Surfer (actually a pretty big image) go through a wave, with his image flickering as the water rushes in front. But what about the other games completed while you were with Epyx guys?

"Keep in mind that the names have now been changed," says RJ. "Time Quest and Treasure Chests is now Gauntlet 3. ElectroCop and Rampage are new names also. We did finish another one called Chips Challenge, but it's doubtful that it will be marketed this year. I'm still very partial to Gates of Zendacon - great explosions!"

That's nice, but are there any secret tricks or 'Easter-eggs' in the games? "Tell them about Gauntlet," prods Dave.

"Okay. You know to move around fighting evil things and gathering treasure. Help from your friends is possible as you can easily connect up to 8 players through the system - each seeing his/her own perspective on the game. Now if you do things just right, there's a special level where you can walk through a wall and discover a whole new set of monsters. All with the digitised faces of people from Epyx, including ourselves. This game also has a digitised opening sequence with the main baddie yelling at you."

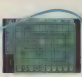
"There's a lot of areas yet to cover," muses Dave. "More 3-dimensional perspective use, a road-race game would be nice. Blue Lightning is a great 'afterburner' type, but viewing all the action from the cockpit would make for a neat game."

RJ concurs. "I'd also like to see games that will use the battery back-up feature of the cartridges for extended play going on over weeks or months."

As we untie the two from their chairs, we ask about future plans. "Hard to say," remarks Dave honestly. "We're free agents right now and talking to a lot of folks. Anybody out there with 6 million dollars to invest? We did LYNX for 4 - with some cost errors - so 6 would really go down well." (Send checks made out to me - Ed) RJ looks out the window at the mostly undamaged landscape, and notes that the sky's the limit. "And after what we've been through - it's safer too," he wryly quips. In other words - they're not saying. But whatever the future brings, it'll be another example of their not just pushing against the technology envelope; but folding, bending, tearing, and mutilating it.

Saw your
sister who
was the girl
of my
dreams.

PLUGIT IN



ZOOMIN' AROUND

Your fighter-bomber misses the primary target. Gulping fuel too fast for comfort, you must head for the secondary quickly or the mission is a total loss.

Which means checking the map. More and more action simulation games require using a map in order to plot the course between where you are, and where you need to get to [flight sims go without saying]. Some programs run in "real-time" and have no sympathy as you fumble over points to align and numbers to write down. What is needed is a tool that will enhance these missions, helping you get there fast!

Answering this need is STRIKE FORCE NAVIGATOR (yes it does look a bit like a see through pancake flipper). Just place the 'NAV on a paper map, or computer screen and line up your current position using the engraved 360° compass. Then use the joystick or mouse to set the heading to that direction and off you go.

STRIKE FORCE NAVIGATOR is 100% compatible with all computer and video entertainment systems. Flexible as well, so don't expect it to wimp out in use. Plus it sports a distinctly military look and feel. So when the going gets tough, now get going FAST.

ADVANTAGE ACE:
3452 Pheasant Run Court #8
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48108
Retail - $7.95 ($4.00 shipping on overseas orders)

SPEED RACIN'

Model cars are a great way to get your hands on an exciting machine in miniature They're even better when you can rev them up and watch 'em go Forget the mess of gasoline motors, now there's a new breed of small, battery powered racers that all run on standard 'AA' cells And these little guys hit speeds of up to 30 miles per hour!

That's faster than you can say "Pedal to the metal." Smokie might not be pleased, but there's going to be a lot of fun had as they become available Coming from numerous toy makers in various styles and shapes (some with interchangeable charged-up motors), one of the first to appear are the HYPER DRIVERS from Tonka Run them right out of the box, no assembly required. Eight styles, and low priced ($7.99 retail each) - they're designed for stunts and collisions, whether running wild or placed on a track. Our favorite is the Vicious Viper We took him outside for a test run more deadly than most the New York sidewalk. Ran a good half of block before jumping the curve and being stopped by the side of a Chevy Didn't hurt him though, his wheels are still spinning today. Oh - almost forgot to mention, but the cars make very satisfactory VROOMING sounds

TONKA
6000 Clearwater Drive
Minnetonka, Minnesota 55343

PIPE ME TO THE STARS

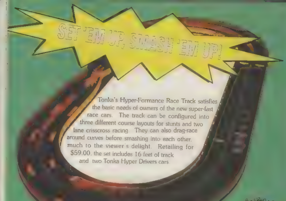
As a career choice, plumbers seem to have it made. You work indoors, the pay is good, and anybody makes trouble - rap them on the head with a wrench. That's not the case with PIPE DREAM though. Here you must build the longest possible continuous pipeline - staying many steps ahead of a stream of FLOOZ, a deadly sewer cleaning fluid that is doing its best to overflow out into your face.

Pipe pieces of various lengths appear randomly, and must be quickly placed into position. They can't be rotated either - but you can replace an existing piece that hasn't yet been filled by placing a new one on top (you lose some points, but that's life). The old pipe explodes, by the way. Provided that you can stay ahead of the flow, the round ends once the counter empties of the total number of pipe pieces required. Then it's on to the next level.

With 36 increasingly complicated play levels, lots of color, a slow motion training mode, and one of the most bizarre looking copy protection wheels in the business (the Pipe Fitters Guide: A Plumber's Helper), this game has the tendency to get just a bit nerve wracking. So it's just as well that there are three playing modes, with Basic popping the pipe out of a single dispenser that also shows what the next five pieces to follow will be. Expert uses two dispensers for the pipe, while those truly competitive will go for the two-plumber option: with player one using the pipes from the top dispenser as #2 takes his/hers from the bottom.

There are those who might say that this game is addictive. They'd be right.

LUCASFILM LTD., GAMES DIVISION
Post Office Box 2009
San Rafael, California 94912



Tonka's Hyper-Formance Race Track satisfies the basic needs of owners of the new super-fast race cars. The track can be configured into three different course layouts for stunts and two lane crisscross racing. They can also drag-race around curves before smashing into each other, much to the viewer's delight. Retailing for $59.00, the set includes 16 feet of track and two Tonka Hyper Drivers cars

"GIVE ME ONE RIGHT NOW" CONTEST

And it can be yours. TONKA graciously gives one away, but you'll have to work to win it. How many different racing cars can you name? List and number them on a sheet of paper and send it to us at the "MASTER" address, noting GIVE CONTEST on it. The winner will be chosen based on the highest total of correct answers. Cars can be from any time period and of any make. The more you can list, the greater your chance of being the winner.

TAP INTO THIS ONE CONTEST

Isn't it about time you got rid of that boring keychain? LUCASFILM GAMES knows that having one sporting a working Wrench has always been your dream - so 100 lucky people will now have the means for killing "bugs" and other small computer vermin that get too close. This one is a straight draw. Just give us your name and address on the back of a postcard (or on a sheet of paper in an envelope if desired), and send it to us at the "MASTER" address. Please mark TAP CONTEST on the outside.

INTERACTIVE GAMING

HIGHLIGHT • MEETS • HIGH-TECH

Sometimes you just gotta blow your own horn - or flash your lights. MEGGADOTS are a 20 second explosion of color contained in a variety of shapes. Each proudly displays an electronic circuit panel which responds to touch by flickering a pattern of L.E.D.'s for 20 seconds. Then all is quiet until the next time. Pin them to your shirt, or adapt them as earrings. Shapes come in red and black,- with Spirals, Stars, Wedges, even UFO designs. Replacable button batteries keep that electrifying personality of yours in business.

SOLIX: 71 Ocean Parkway Brooklyn, New York 11218 Retail - $16.00 ($4.00 shipping on overseas orders)

"YUP, THAT'S FOR ME" CONTEST

All you Biffs and Alysens out there - you know who we're talking to - probably want a Meggadot of your very own. SOLIX has parted with 10, so write us a short (50 words or less) essay on why you deserve one of these definitely Yuppie items. Place your answer on the back of a postcard (or on a sheet of paper in an envelope if desired), and send it to us at the "MASTER" address. Please mark YUP CONTEST on it. We'll let you know later who the judge to blame was.

CALENDER OF EVENTS 1990

Winter Consumer Electronics Show (CES) · Las Vegas, Nevada
January 6 - 9

•

American International Toy Fair · Manhattan, New York
February 12 - 21

•

World of Commodore · Vancouver, B.C., Canada
February 9 - 12 (tentative)

•

World of Atari · Disneyland Orlando, Florida
April 6 (Trade) April 7 & 8 (General admission)

CONTEST

"ZOOM, ZOOM, ZOOM"

[illegible]

[illegible]

MASTER ADDRESS

Mail all entries to THE IMAGINATION WORKSHOP, Newsfield Ltd., 47 Gravel Hill, Ludlow, Shropshire, England SY8 1QS.

Please mark the appropriate contest name on the outside of the postcard/letter in the lower left hand corner (makes our life a bit easier). It's a good idea to put your name and address somewhere as well.

Now here we go again with the legal stuff. Eligability is limited to those persons who have no relationship, no matter how remote, with anyone who works for The Imagination Workshop, Newsfield Ltd., or any of the companies offering prizes. Only one prize per person may be awarded. Contests close January 30th, 1990. Unclaimed prizes may be offered as additional premiums in following issues.

Promotional considerations provided by ADVANTAGE ACE, LUCASFILM GAMES, SOLIX, and TONKA

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The Games machine

REVIEWS: PART 2

MAGIC MARBLE

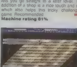
Sphinx Software ■ Amiga

As you may have guessed, this is a variation on the Marble Madness theme, giving an isometric view of lofty high-tech platforms scrolling horizontally. Nasties are kept to a minimum, speed and little friction being the main worries as slender floating platforms are navigated.

Graphics are quite plain, the platforms which make up the vast majority of the screen being simple and a little blocky, although scrolling smoothly, the stars beyond them moving in parallax. The marble itself, however, is much better, realistically shaded in blue with its highlights changing position as it goes. Music is repetitive but spot effects are lively and there are some neat graphic pieces of presentation in the program — numbers spinning in 3-D and vector grids distorting in time with title music.

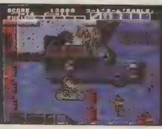
Though the general look and control Magic Marble is close to the Atari's Madness, it's combination of dextrous arcade action and switch puzzles places it nearer to Electric Dreams' excellent Spindizzy. Often you try to struggle through a difficult section, using different approaches, only later to find a much easier way using switches and special squares. Being put up against a time limit makes gameplay frantic but a password lets you go straight to a later level. The addition of a shop is a nice touch and one which also helps this tricky, challenging game. Recommended. **WL**

Machine rating 81%



BLOODY WOLF

Deco/Data East ■ PC Engine £29.95



Choose from a bald guy or a headbanded Schwarzenegger type then march straight on in your horizontally-scrolling mission. Enemy soldiers attack from the right but you're armed with a rifle — later equipment includes a motorbike, dagger, grenades, body armour and flippers.

Hostages sit ready for rescue along the way, some in the buildings which line the route, but mean, end-of-stage bad guys can also lurk there, and they're sure not pushovers.

Bloody Wolf is an easily accessible bullet-spraying jaunt. Unadulterated bloody (of course) violence is great fun, leaping around and revving bikes, trusty gun always at hand, and is entertaining for a while. **WL**

Machine rating 72%

DARIUS+

The Edge ■ Atari ST £19.99

Darius was successful in the arcades due to the three-screen display. The Edge have taken ages converting this Taito coin-op, and just like the arcade counterpart there is no plot. It is simple: lay into the nasty bug-eyed alien hordes with every weapon at your disposal.

This is where Darius+ falls down. It's so hard you can never get weapons to match the enemy's. Graphically, the game is good and the range of weaponry impressive. However, the ship is so slow moving it's almost impossible to get out of the way in time. And when you die, you lose all weapons — the Fattie Fish being impossible to beat without every possible offensive weapon. You just can't win.

Machine rating 70%

CROSSBOW — THE LEGEND OF WILLIAM TELL

Screen 7 ■ Atari ST £19.99

William Tell is trying to save the population of the land from a fate worse than death. With crossbow in hand, Bill sets out to right wrongs, do brave deeds and turn aggressive folk into pin cushions. Crossbow is controlled by icons, the bottom of the screen is filled with them, and most bring up sub-icons.

You'll meet the locals on your travels, so help the simple village folk who will in turn help you, while others are vicious people who will stop at nothing. If you do suffer at the hands ■ the latter, pray you are found by the helpful villagers soon.

The idea of using icons ■ control a game isn't new, but in Crossbow the response time ■ sluggish. Loading and firing the bow for example ■ a real chore. Although this can be improved on discovering the winding device, allowing you to fire several bolts at once.

Graphically the ST version's okay, but doesn't exactly push the machine. Sound ■ a bit better, with good shooting sounds. But the icon controls are a REAL PAIN. **MC**

Machine rating 65%

OTHELLO KILLER

Ubi Soft ■ Amiga £19.99

Wow. Othello on computer! Well, almost. The counters are red and white (although their colour may be changed) and you haven't got the freedom of the board – counters can only be positioned on highlighted squares. You can play against another human or at one of four computer skill levels.

There's not much you can do with computerised Othello. Killer is clear and functional but boring. Sound is a harp, a thump and the Amiga's built-in butch robotic speech, plus a pathetically looped short music sample.

Okay, so Othello ■ a simple yet highly thought-provoking game, and the computer can ■ a very challenging opponent. But if you want to play the game against someone, it's so much more interesting to use a real, physical board and counters. If you haven't got anyone ■ play against, I'm sure there are many, many other one-player games you'd prefer. Try Pictionary instead, it's much better value. **WL**

Machine rating 37%

ROCK-ON

Big Club PC [illegible] £29.95

Gasp! A PC Engine with an onscreen *English* storyline!! It's laughably badly translated, mind you, and is some fatuous garbage about people being bored but some searching for Fisa, a mysterious item that will bestow happiness and good fortune.

You are a 'Buster', one of the Fisa searchers, and pilot a little rounded spaceship. As you go on your journey, waves of aliens attack and are eliminated with your cannon. Some leave behind icons that, when collected, power-up to three different stronger weapons, fired with button two.

Oh dear. Sprites are colourful but ■ a fairly random manner, vague definition derived from other games' craft. Horizontal scrolling is smooth, as ■ the slight vertical scroll (like Engine R-Type), but backgrounds are plain, dull and repetitive so it's hardly worth it. Fast-paced music and warbly effects are simple backing.

Yet another Salamander/R-Type variant, this one distinctive only by its poor quality and yawn-inspiring gameplay. Predictable-looking and moving aliens wander into view, you zap a few, collect some icons, shoot a few more bad guys, face an end-of-level nasty. Don't waste your energy on this. **WL**

Machine rating 28%

ALEX KIDD: HIGH-TECH WORLD

Sega/Mastertronic ■ Sega £24.95

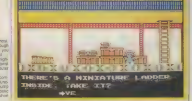
The Crown Prince of Radactian, Alex Kidd, is obviously the sort of dude who'd like to read TGM. The High-Tech World of the title is in fact the name of his home world's latest and best video arcade and Alex is intent on getting there today, before it closes at 5pm.

His coin-op hunting mission is divided into three parts, parts one and three (the castle and the village) taking the form of flick-screen arcade adventures. Objects are used and people met in the castle to gain pieces of map and in the village to get the travel pass necessary to reach the arcade.

Alex Kidd isn't going to break any boundaries, not for the Sega and certainly not for the games industry, but it's pleasant and playable arcade adventure that's easy to get into. The text conversations that occur between characters as they meet are a good touch and add some sense of story and involvement to the game, although it would've been a lot better if you could select Alex's speech from a list of three or four phrases rather than him say the same old pre-programmed things.

There's nothing special about the arcadey forest section but it's action is ■ welcome distraction to separate the arcade adventures. Overall, Alex Kidd: High Tech World's gameplay makes a change from most console products so is worthy of Sega owners' attention. **WL**

Machine rating 76%



THERE'S A MINIATURE LADDER INSIDE. TAKE IT?
➔YE

COMMANDO

Elite ■ Atari ST, Amiga £19.99

Commando was *the* vertically-scrolling shoot-'em-up of 1984. Trouble is, that things have progressed a ■ since then. The 16-bit release ■ Commando ■ as much a mystery as Paperboy's release four months ago. Elite would say that it's because the game's one of the most playable games of all-time – it *was*. Do people really expect to pay twenty quid for a poor conversion of an old arcade game? It would be okay if Commando was good, but it's lost playability, has poor collision detection and is just as easy as the Spectrum version.

Machine rating Atari ST 70%
Amiga 72%

WONDER MOMO

Namco/Hudson Soft PC Engine £29.95

I'm sure our Japanese correspondent, Shintaro, will correct me if I'm wrong, but it appears that the athletic long-haired Momo dominating this product's packaging is something [illegible] a cartoon (TV or film) starlette [illegible] the East.

In her game, she's the heroine of a stage play with an unusual cast of monsters to be defeated. Each 'act' (level) scrolls horizontally but as it's on stage they're only a few screens in length.

While Momo generally defends herself with three different kicks, picking up an occasional yellow and green pod sends her pirouetting at high speed, destructive sparks shooting out from her sides. And when a mini whirlwind envelops her she becomes... WONDER MOMO!! In this guise she's padded out with armour and armed with a power hoop which bounces off enemies, killing or damaging them.

Although it's a very straightforward game, Wonder Momo is great fun, kicking and 'hooping' bad guys. Though it's set in an unusual location, curtains and audience giving a weird atmosphere, it's restricted size limits gameplay so much that when you reach act six, the first really tough one, you're likely to have become too bored to bother putting much more effort in. Try other Engine titles before this one.

WL

Machine rating 54%

GOLF BOY

NCS ■ PC Engine £29.95

This is a simulation of the sport of hockey. Um, my mistake: golf. Up to four players can compete on three courses, their progress on each hole plotted on a plan view of the area. It has all the usual choices of clubs etc that we've come to expect from golf games.

A menu allows the course and green to be viewed at leisure, playing characteristics altered, scores displayed and advice given — the latter completely useless because it's in Japanese.

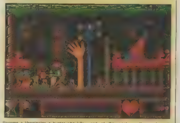
Graphics are very plain. Courses are simply composed from small graphic cells giving the game a very drab, repetitive appearance. The golfer sprite is animated nicely but the ball moves jerkily over the map, often ignoring laws of physics. Sound is a simple, happy tune and a few suitable thwack and clunk effects.

Golf Boy's major failing is that it ignores the standard first-person perspective viewpoint of golf, popularised by US Gold's classic Leaderboard. Simply plotting the path of the ball on a high plan view of each hole is a very old-fashioned manner of converting the sport and also a fairly boring one. On the Engine, Winning Shot is far better. **WL**

Machine rating 33%

VERMINATOR

Rainbird ■ Atari ST £24.99



Become a Verminator, a hunter who kills all the nasty slimey creatures even uglier than yourself, so cleansing the ancient, decaying tree kingdom of Dendra.

You begin at the approximate centre of the massive tree, which flick-scrolls horizontally and vertical as the unusual sprite walks, jumps and runs around. He brandishes a mallet which he uses to bludgeon the vermin to death but, by visiting a shop, he can add weapons and devices.

Initially, you have 1000 credits ready to spend, but that's only because you've got a loan at the bank so must eventually pay it back. Subsequent loans can be requested by visiting them but The Mob are much more lenient in who they lend their money to — but you have to pay them back at the end of the week or they get pretty annoyed!

Visually, Verminator appeals greatly. It's all like a strange cartoon: stone columns, shops, teleporters and strange flitting creatures mix with the earthy colours of the tree. The verminator himself is clearly best, an unusual chap with an excellently animated running action and an amusing death sequence. Sound is bog-standard music plus a couple of nice samples.

But there's a very real limit on how long you can play Verminator without getting bored of wandering around, hitting creatures over the head with blunt instruments. Not quite what you'd expect of Rainbird.

WL

Machine rating 72%

Blue Angel 69

Magic Bytes ■ Amiga (£19.99) C64 (£9.99 cass, £14.99 disk)

Blue Angel 69 is a one- or two-player puzzle game with a difference. When you clear the board you are awarded with a slinky picture of a scantily dressed robot. The puzzle screen consists of a grid of squares. Each square has a number on it, and is one of two colours (signifying negative and positive values). You and your opponent take turns at picking up the squares. Your opponent has to pick from the squares on the same vertical line as the last square picked, and you on the horizontal. The player with the most points at the end of the game is the winner.

On the Amiga the pictures are obviously digitised with all the offending bits covered with metallic robot parts. The strategy game on both versions is fairly challenging, especially on later levels. Although, the computer can often make totally illogical moves, thus making it infuriating and very hard to beat. Still, the concept if fairly original and a challenge for puzzle fans

Machine rating Amiga 65% C64 63%

FALLEN ANGEL

Screen 7 ■ Amiga £19.99

He used to be a real lad, the best, most efficient Guardian Angel in the whole of the New York subway system. But then his Green Beret brother died from a drug overdose, and vowing vengeance he tracked down the pushers and killed them. Wearing his brother's beret as a tribute, he became a renegade -- the Fallen Angel.

As luck would have it, he discovered a major international drugs ring based around the London, Paris and New York subways. So now you wiggle a joystick to make him kick and punch the many pushers he finds in London. You have to choose which stations to visit and the aim is to find and kill the ringleader then a flight ticket to get Angel to the next country's subway.

Both the backgrounds and sprites are very similar to Vigilante's. Bright, bold and detailed, the sprites having well-shaded flesh. It's generally great to look at, despite simple animation and mildly juddery scrolling. Effects are predictable groan samples and music is suitably dramatic and staccato. Gratuitous violence usually goes down well so even though lasting interest is dubious, Fallen Angel is worth a look. **WL**

Machine rating 71%

SPEEDBOAT ASSASSINS

16 Blitz ■ Atari ST, Amiga £4.99

You play a real high-flying marine asked to save four famous harbours from enemy forces using just a speedboat and a few missiles.

Viewed from above and behind, like the perspective of a racing game, the boat has to be steered between two lines of mines for the first part of each harbour. Then, with missiles, you must destroy enemy boats and the four communication towers which control them. Later, a helicopter increases your abilities with rocket launchers, speed, manoeuvrability and smart bombs.

The main sprite isn't bad but the horizon graphics and other sprites are simple and jerky in comparison. At least the water's silly stripes move smoothly but, though different, sound is bad on both versions; the ST has highly irritating white noise effects and the Amiga cliched bang/boom samples.

The Amiga version's playable, so you shouldn't have too much trouble reaching the weak shooting sections, while on the ST it's often frustratingly difficult so you have to go at a boringly low speed to reach the equally uninspiring sections. Although, both versions are not recommended. **WL**

Machine rating Atari ST 41% Amiga 46%

MINDBENDER

Magic Bytes ■ Amiga £19.99

Though its plot talks of gnomes, wizards and magic spells, and graphics are appropriately designed for this, Mindbender is essentially Deflektor. It's been complicated with the addition of sensor blocks, surprise balloons, amoeboid walls and so on, making the level completion even more of a challenge. If the 99 levels aren't enough, a designer option lets you create screens of your own.

Bright and bold (sometimes gaudy), graphics have very average detail, effects are simple, and music is remarkably repetitive, but in a puzzle game such as this it's little problem. One of Mindbender's strengths is being able to see the entire level at a glance and know where the beam *should* go but not knowing *how* to get it there! It's largely a matter of trial-and-error at first and even with experience luck plays a part in the game.

Unless they're particular fans, those who already have Deflektor can probably live without Mindbender. Newcomers will be surprised to find an unusual, puzzling game that has hours of play on offer. **WL**

Machine rating 78%

HONEY SKY

Face ■ PC Engine £29.95

Well this is a strange little game and no mistake, as you may be already thinking from its title. The main sprite is a cuddly little rocket. As for the story, it's extraneous in this inane shoot-'em-up — translation is pointless for this weak game.

The rocket can be manoeuvred around the whole screen and its wand — the weapon its defends itself with — can be directed in any of the main compass directions using button two. Waves appear over the vertically scrolling landscape and later the magic wand can be updated for heavier firepower.

Backgrounds lack detail, using gaudy colours, and are composed of endlessly repeating graphic cells. Though there are a few decent ones, sprites are almost as simple and dull to look at. Sound effects are mediocre and music is irritatingly twee.

The game itself is no better. Being able to alter the firing direction was a good idea but as you can only rotate the wand clockwise it's one that's let down by its restrictions. This is one of the rare shoot-'em-ups that has almost zero appeal, so it hardly needs to be said, don't buy. **WL**

Machine rating 21%

Safari Guns

Infogrames ■ Amiga £19.99

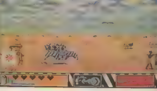
Your task is to photograph animals and shoot poachers in your safari reserve. With scrolling similar to Operation Wolf, your targets move into picture from the sides, bottom and top of the screen.

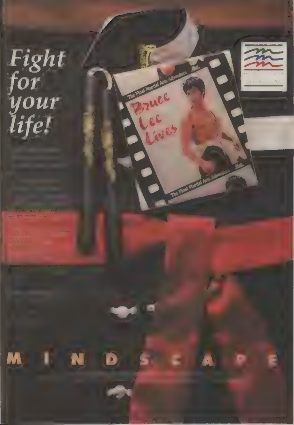
Only snap a few pictures of each animal – exclusive shots are wanted, so you score more for the first than you do for the second. But make sure you snap the right thing. (Taking pictures of poachers is no use!) Concentrate on shooting the helicopters, coach loads of big game hunters, guys behind bushes and ivory traffickers.

The level ends when your film is used up. It is then examined, and your score adjusted. If you've enough points, you move to the next region.

Safari Guns is a fun way to spend a wet afternoon, but it sadly lacks any game content and playability. Although, visually and sonically it's very good. **MC**

Machine update 70%

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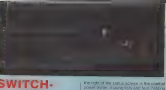


CLOUD MASTER

Sega/Mastertronic ■ Sega £24.95

Cloud Master ■ a game based on the TV programme, Monkey, like SonSon II, reviewed on the PC Engine in TGM021. The latter was ■ Super Wonder Boy-style scrolling jump-and-bash game while Cloud Master ■ yer average horizontal shoot-em-up.

Needless ■ say you control Monkey himself, the orange-faced leader of some badly-dubbed adventurers and you're 'aboard' your camp little cloud. The cloud's steered around the sky above a scrolling landscape and various bad guys attack, but Monkey can fight back with Monkey magic. His power can be increased by collecting icons.

This ■ one of the grottiest looking Sega games we've ever seen. Backgrounds use criminally few colours, level one just white, black and grey plus one or two bright colours on the crude ground features. Sprites are as badly designed, all childish in appearance except, strangely, flying bowls ■ rice! (Or ■ it breakfast cereal?) Scrolling is okay but tediously slow. If you've some money to spend on a Sega game use ■ on Alex Kidd, High-Tech World or Tennis Ace.

WL

Machine rating 20%

SWITCH-BLADE

Gremlin ■ Amiga £19.99

A magical sword, inert for 10,000 years, has inexplicably shattered. You must find the 16 pieces in a future world dominated by the evil Havok and his weird minions. This violent mob must be stopped, so when you have the sword you must slay Havok with it.

You start the game with only your fists and feet for protection, but weapons such as Blade, Scorchball, Dart, Spinblade, Needle Bolt and Trispike can be found. To the right of the status screen is the combat power meter. If using fists and feet, holding the fire button down for a certain amount of time varies the move you make. If using a weapon, the power of the shot can be controlled using the same meter.

Switchblade sounded to us to be a bit of a corny title for a game but after a few attempts we changed our tune. The heroic character sprite is a chunky little chap who wastes no time in laying into the enemy, either bare-handed or with a range of very lethal weapons. Sound is also good with the choice of an atmospheric tune or thwack, bang crunch sound effects. In short, Switchblade is an enjoyable bash-'em-up romp.

MC

Machine rating 78%

VARIS II — FANTASM SOLDIER

Laser Soft ■ PC Engine £39.95

Masses of Japanese speech, courtesy of CD-ROM, intro this game which, judging from the graphics, is something to do with a girl's sister being killed by giant humanoids, and the girl vowing revenge.

The game itself is ■ usual console stuff: run along a series of horizontally scrolling screens killing bad guys with your sword and duelling with mean ringleaders ■ the end of each level. It differs from most in that during each level you have to fight right, left and upwards. Along with extra energy, loads of weapons can be picked up.

Aesthetically, the introduction is the best part of the game. The graphics and sound are straight from ■ Japanese cartoon and a superb atmosphere is generated. The CD-ROM really shows off here, and in interlev■ scenes.

In-game graphics aren't nearly as interesting, some backgrounds are drab and repetitive but they're generally quite good. The same goes for the sprites but animation could've been much smoother.

Varis II's simple action ■ enjoyable at first but lacks variety. In effect the game's basically an expensive way to show-off the capabilities of the Engine and ■ CD-ROM. But is that really ■ bad thing?

WL

Machine rating 74%

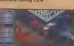
CHICAGO 90

Infogrames ■ Atari ■ £19.99

1990 Chicago is not much different from 1920s Chicago — ■ filled with warring gangsters. You can choose whether ■ be a cop or robber. The rules are simple: if a cop you are given control over six police cars which must stop the bad guy from escaping. If the baddie you obviously have to avoid capture. The game is presented from a bird's eye view with a row of seven icons down the left side of the screen (one for the gangster's car, six for the police). The cop can flip between his six cars whenever he wants. Two radar displays are present ■ the bottom of the screen. One is long range, showing about 10% of the playing area and can be scrolled around. The other shows what ■ coming at you from the other end ■ the street. Whichever mode you are in, run ■ pursuit, other road users will get in your way.

Fans of American cops shows will probably like Chicago 90. The amount of obstacles ■ your path certainly keep you on your toes, but ■ playing an officer of the law one pair of eyes isn't enough to keep tabs on your units and watch where the felon ■ going. Good fun, but longterm playability may wane.

Machine rating 72%



[illegible]

NCS/Hudson ■ PC Engine £29.95

Another Japanese run-and-jump-along-horizontal-levels-and-hit-things-with-a-big-sword game. It's little different from the norm in that the player can choose his/her identity, Tasuke (male) or Kyapiko (female), or two players can tackle the robotic assailants simultaneously. A map screen allows a route through the levels to be chosen but unless you're fluent in Japanese the other options are useless.

We're back to normal for the remaining game elements: big end-of-level nasties and pick-ups ■ restore energy and give extra weaponry.

Backgrounds scroll smoothly but are boring ■ look at, some drawn just in shades ■ grey, and though bright and cartoon-like, sprites are unimpressive; generally, ■ looks like a Nintendo game. The clear, sampled

Japanese speech is the sonic highlight, despite being infrequent. Music sounds like an Oriental soap opera theme.

There's nothing actually *wrong* with Overhauled Man, it's just that this sort of thing has been done to death on consoles. There's certainly some fun to be had with this, particularly when playing with a friend, but don't go out of your way to get hold of it. **WL**

machine rating 67%

[illegible]

Hudson Soft ■ PC Engine £29.95

The game's very much in the Space Harrier mould, our hero running 'into' the screen over brightly-coloured stripey landscapes. However, he can't fly, jumping high into the air instead, to float gracefully back down (his descent no doubt slowed by thermal currents catching his flares). And instead of a laser cannon tucked under his arm, he has a big Ninja sword, its power dependent on how long the fire button is held down (like R-Type).

The nicest part of the graphics is the smooth and realistic shifting of the horizon and sprites as the warrior changes altitude. Otherwise, perspective is decidedly iffy, the stripes moving a little jerkily and plain sprites jumping out from the horizon. Animation is simple and audio a selection of warbling Japanese tunes.

Japan Warrior is a very ordinary game, particularly for the Engine. Its Space Harrier origins can't be ignored, especially when bearing in mind that some end-of-level monsters are giant, snake-like dragons that change colour as they weaken. **WL**

Machine rating 56%

TENNIS ACE

Sega/Mastertronic ■ Sega £24.95

One or two players choose their character by assessing their technique, power and speed. A tournament is chosen from around the world before the match commences.

On the court, a side view of the serving player is given, a well-timed button press hitting the ball over the net. The game then switches to a *bird's eye* view, the entire court fitting across the screen's width. Gameplay's the same as the real thing – run up to the ball and hit the ball.

A distant player hits a tennis ball out of the screen and into the title for a nice game intro. The character portraits are pleasant but the map of the world is grotty. In-game graphics are very pleasing to the eye, the serving sprite big and well designed, court lushly green and sprites small yet neat and representative.

Although it's very simple to play, Tennis Ace is also great fun. There's no sophistication but it has the general feel of tennis and is satisfying when you win. It can quite easily become boring competing against the console players but a two player extends the fun of the game. Sega-owning tennis fans won't have any worries with this purchase. **WL**

Machine update 76%

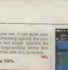
FINAL LAP TWIN

Namco Hudson ■ PC Engine £29.95

This is one to really rev your Engine over. The screen is split horizontally to give independent behind-the-car views for both drivers. There are eight different Formula One cars to choose from, as well as several racing tracks.

Although the cars are small, road movement is smooth, swift and realistic. Roadside features are a touch jerky but no more than usual and the pleasant horizon graphics shift smoothly.

The second section of the game is a quest. A cute little sprite is guided round a maze-like town which is rather bland.



Occasionally you're challenged to race your remote control buggy against others. These buggy races are presented like the Formula One section. Winning a race enables parts of the buggy to be updated. But the graphics are a let down – a stripey road fails to give a real sense of movement.

Music throughout the package is a mixture of funky, hectic, tense and jolly pieces but spot effects are basic.

As a one-player game this has a lot to offer: the Formula One part for exciting, out-and-out speed thrills and the Quest for racing with added trading, strategy and maze elements. All the same, most fun is to be had with a second player, going one-on-one in a race to the death! **WL**

Machine rating 79%

SNOOPY — The Cool Computer Game

The Edge Atari ST £19.99

Not content with bringing Jim Davis's cynical feline hero to the computer screen, The Edge have signed up the Peanuts gang, and most especially Snoopy. It is he who must solve the riddle of the disappearing blanket. The piece of bedding in question belongs to Linus, and fans will know that he won't go anywhere without it.

As Snoopy strolls around picking up objects and solving clues, the other members of the Peanuts clan occasionally move into view. Charlie Brown, Lucy and Peppermint Patty (among others) have a small part to play in the game because certain of the objects that Snoopy finds belong to them. You can be absolutely sure that everything Snoopy finds has a use, even the score board (Snoopy will tell you your score via a thought bubble) and watch (you only have 45 minutes real time) have a purpose.

The Edge tell us that they have hidden the blanket in at least two different places, so solve one riddle and another remains. Snoopy – The Cool Computer Game is presented in the same style as Garfield's Big Fat Deal. The characters are large and well drawn, at least we recognised all the members of the Peanuts cartoon strip. Anyone with a soft spot for Snoopy should take a look. **MC**

Machine rating 75%

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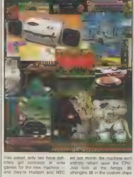
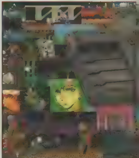
OUR MAN IN

After TGM exclusively revealed ALL the details about the new PC Engine from NEC last month, Shintaro Kanaoya returns this month with some news about a revolutionary new add-on

Date: November 30, 1989. Rush down to your nearest Japanese toy shop, hand the person behind the counter 39'800 yen (approximately £160), and ask for a PC Engine Super Grafx. The lady behind the counter will give you a big teethful Japanese smile and in return hand over the latest innovation in Far Eastern technology – complete with stunning 8-bit technology. Alternatively, save your money and buy a 16-bit Nintendo when it comes out next year



Cynicism aside, the new machine is out NOW (unlike the Super Famicon) and it looks OK. Although I do prefer the Sega Mega Drive aesthetically, and the software houses aren't about to leap to its support immediately. Out of 29 companies asked, only two have definitely got contracts to write games for the new machine – and they're Hudson and NEC Avenue, co-creators of the Engine. 11 companies are thinking about it, while another 11 have no plans for the new machine. 23 of the 29 think the machine is just too damn expensive – they obviously haven't seen the price of your grey imports! Although, £160 for a machine that seems to only marginally improve upon the £100 machine is quite an asking price considering the market is mostly made up of children – the people with the really large disposable incomes normally dispose of their money elsewhere, like Columbia Pictures or The Rockerfeller Centre



But the machine does seem to have improved over the original by quite a bit. Even if the CPU is the same, as I suggested last month the machine isn't entirely reliant upon the CPU. Just look at the Amiga. Its strengths [illegible] in the custom chips that handle specific tasks – graphics, sound, etc

So how will the contracted companies exploit the new machine's capabilities? Well, NEC Avenue are releasing two arcade conversions and Hudson are releasing an adaptation of a cartoon, and a combat flight simulator.

The NEC Avenue conversions are of two of the most popular games of the year: Strider and Ghouls 'n' Ghosts. G+G is the biggie. Eight megabytes big. This is the power of the new machine' memory. It's been doubled (see last month's article for all the specifications). Quite frankly, it looks every bit (or byte) as good as its 16-bit Mega Drive counterpart. If you liked the arcade version, get it (currently only out on the Super Grafx and Mega Drive, though).

Hudson's two are the cartoon adaptation, which looks very dull, and Battle Ace, a combat flight sim over land and sea, shooting all sorts of enemy aircraft and ground targets. Personally, all these driving/flying games are a bit unrealistic when played with a joystick/pad. It seems that NEC have had similar ideas too. And that's where the latest piece of Japanese technology comes in: it's the aptly named *Power Console* – as rumoured in my column last month.

The Power Console is what the Konix Multi System is supposed to be, minus the hydraulic chair. It costs £240, only works with the PC Engine Super Grafx and should revolutionise the way we play games (before the Konix ever does!).

The Power Console is a large peripheral. It fits over the Super Grafx which dwarfs the old Engine. Still, it needs to be. The functions it contains are incredible: yoke; joystick; four fire buttons plus two on the pilot controls; calculator; clock; a replay feature to re-run games up to last point reached; jog dial; functioning speedometer which can double as a flight panel; throttle lever; built-in multitap (joystick

JAPAN

adaptor) which links up four more controller pads: two autofire buttons; select, run and power buttons; and a little case which can store ten games.

Impressive. No other word quite describes it, or the price. But you pay for what you get, and quite frankly, you get everything you need. It could wake you up in the morning with its built-in alarm to the tunes of R-Type. A quick blast — sod breakfast — and off to work.

You keep dying on level three of R-Type. Why bother doing levels one and two again, just let the computer replay your movements up to there and take over again at level three.

Having trouble working out how long it's going to take to pay back the shop with the 'easy-to-pay' monthly instalments. Simple, work it out on your calculator.

Or perhaps you're in the middle of defeating the Bydo Empire. You know you have to leave the house soon but you can't be bothered to look at the clock behind you. No problem. Lower your eyes, no head movement necessary, and there will be the time. Gaming in general has been made easier with this new machine, and obviously more fun. You need never use those funny controllers again.

But £240, £400 total with the Super Grafx, is quite simply a heck of a lot of anyone's dosh — especially when you're not sure whether other software companies are going to support this quite brilliant machine and add-on. Problems, problems. Not for you Brits — it probably won't reach the UK for ages. However, each night, Japan racks its brain over such dilemmas. What a terrible, terrible life.

For the very few of you that have PC Engine CD-ROMs, you may be interested to know that with the advent of the Super Grafx, NEC will be releasing a link between the Grafx and the Engine CD-ROM which allows faster access time (something Altered Beast seriously needs!).

After all that, everything else will seem quite dull. However, still on the Engine front, Chase HQ will be out in January, and Splatterhouse and New Zealand Story in February.

Talk radio

Karaoke, is a Japanese businessman's pastime. It involves singing along with lyrics and pictures displayed on a TV screen from video. Hearing Japanese businessmen sing It's a Long Way to Tipperary is embarrassing to say the least. But think, without this, Japanese businessmen wouldn't be able to take the stress and kill themselves in masses (just like the Japanese students). Japan's success would plummet and you wouldn't get the games and machines that you do from Japan. So, to ease tension and stress at home, NEC Avenue have released ROM ROM Karaoke. You chose songs from different regions, get pictures on the TV screen, and hear yourself sing out of either the TV or the new CD-ROM amplifier system (approximately £100 including speakers). Then you collapse on the floor (or tatami), dead tired, dead embarrassed in front of the wife and kids, and dead happy.

Coming fairly soon is Alien Crush II, the sequel to (wait for it) Alien Crush. Basically the same Alien-inspired graphics with alien-like sound effects and amazingly addictive gameplay.

There are other games, but most look like fairly dull, shoot-'em-ups — Japan is seriously lacking in original concepts.

A quick look at other more trivial machines shows that Batman is coming out on every format known to Japan — Nintendo Famicon, Sega Mega Drive, PC Engine and even the little ol' Game Boy. Also out on the Nintendo is Dracula 3 and Hostages.

The Mega Drive has an RPG called Sorcerian, MahJong Cop (what!!) and Ghostbusters II.

The Game Boy is trying to be taken seriously with the RPG, Selection and also Baseball Kids. As you can tell, the Engine is probably the MAIN thing for now. So, until butterflies start flying backwards and Mrs Thatcher gives up as leader, the PC Engine is where we'll be focusing. Obviously, if something important happens elsewhere (like the 16-bit Nintendo, and the British release of the Mega Drive), you'll know about it through the pages of TGM.

And once again, this brief affair must end. As Lady Macbeth said when she saw the end of Xenon 2, 'Out, damned spot!', I must leave you. The first person to find a connection between Shakespeare, spots, the Bitmap Brothers and TGM wins a sushi salad and a pint of sake. So ponder that thought as I bid you adieu, or as we say, sayonara.

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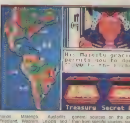
Strong Silent Giants

Away from the central conglomerates of leisure software production — North America, Western Europe and Japan — there are a number of companies who, although isolated from the rest of the gaming fraternity, still have the presence to command our attention. Australia's strategy wargamers, SSG, are one such company and still commit themselves to 8- and 16-bit. Paul Rigby spoke to the men down under...



The large distances from SSG's headquarters to the European and American markets have not hampered their progress, which is a tribute to their determination to succeed. I talked to one of SSG's founders, Ian Trout, and asked him how it all started.

'SSG began as a partnership in 1983 between Roger Keating and myself, with RFTS [Reach for the Stars] as the first game. 16-bit versions of the four-player interstellar conquest game are currently under development. And based on the same basic theme is SSG's latest game, Gold of the Americas (pictured), which has you at the head of a country, during the 15th Century, off to explore, colonise, exploit and defend the new world of the Americas.'

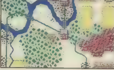
But what of the old faithful Battlefront system which has been the basis of so many SSG releases? Are there any further developments in the pipeline?

'Yes, in our new Panzer Battles – due out by Christmas – the system is expanded so that the basic units can be regiments or divisions rather than battalions. This enables us to handle the scale of Russian Front armoured warfare, which is what the game is all about.' Battlefront has certainly proved to be a very open and modular system. Was it always deemed to be as such?

'Indeed. If a design is not flexible it can't handle the multitude of conditions that can arise on a battlefield. This flexibility made it easier to adapt.'

There's news that SSG are to release a Napoleonic wargame. will that use the Battlefront system? 'The Napoleonic game will share a few of the characteristics of our Civil War system. Given the radically different combat and control systems involved in Napoleonic warfare, it will have very little to do with Battlefront.'

Certainly, Campaigns of Napoleon seems like a game to look forward to. Featuring six scenarios: Marengo, Austerlitz, Friedland, Wagram, Leipzig and Waterloo. Napoleon includes a start-up tutorial and a strategic planning phase for each battle. Using brigade-sized units, the game includes specialised rules for the square, line, column and cavalry formations. As with other SSG products you will be able to customise the game with Warplan and Warpaint.



So what's next after Battlefront? 'Firstly, a new korps/army game covering the entire Western Front, starting with D-Day. Sometime next year the Twilight 2000 roleplaying system plus further conversions of existing 8-bit titles to IBM and Amiga.'

On the subject of 16-bit machines. Will SSG be producing any 16-bit-only products?

'We will not be producing 16-bit only games as such, but we will be doing most of our new designs for 16-bit machines first, and those designs will utilise the fullest capacities of those machines.'

Saying that, what machines and languages are used for developing at present? Ian continues: '8-bit programs are developed on an Apple II in 6502 code. 16-bit programs are usually done first on an MS-DOS 80286 machine using Microsoft's C V5.1.'

Hex grids are getting a bit old now. Ever thought of changing that format? 'Hex grids are by far the best system for regulating complicated movement. Some games, like Gold of the Americas, will use area movement rather than a hex grid.'

One thing that has struck many wargame enthusiasts is the quality of SSG's packaging and the included background information. What research do SSG do for each game?

'The research is done first from general sources on the period, then from specific sources, such as official records and unit histories. In SSG's library and our own private collections we have hundreds of military history books.'

SSG certainly appear to be extremely busy. Are all of games produced in-house or do they use freelancers? 'Most original work is done in-house, and most of that by Roger Keating. Fire King was an outside job, and we are always happy to look at outside programs.'

So what new releases can we look forward to?

'Panzer Battles on the PC and C64, which involves armoured warfare on the Russian Front, Gold of the Americas for the PC and Amiga and Fire King for the PC, all before Christmas. They will be followed by a Western Front game early in 1990.'

Before I thanked Ian Trout for sparing TGM some of his precious time, I had to ask him about fellow Australian company, Panther Games (recent TGM Golden Scroll winners for Fire Brigade). There are not too many software companies in Australia, even less who deal in strategy games. Is there any involvement between the two? 'We don't do any work with Panther games, but we have a loose strategic alliance. As we are the only two of our kind in Australia, we help each other out whenever we can.'

There is no denying the quality of SSG's products, however, it is their enlightening attitude to the customer which I admire. Producing an in-house quarterly journal, Run 5 (bundled with every game), and introducing extra scenarios to games which would be discarded by other, profiteering companies, actually enhances the shelf-life of SSG's products. Products which to the buyer become a part of history...

The ADVENTURE STRATEGY ROLEPLAY Column

Amiga (also ST, PC) £24.95

MURDERS IN VENICE

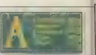
Cobrasoft

Murders in Venice grabs your attention immediately you open the box. The packaging is bursting with clues (purse, camera film, etc) and the game's good graphics only enforce the high visual reputation of French software.

The plot surrounds a terrorist bomb which is timed to go off at high noon. You have five hours to find the bomb and arrest the criminals. All investigation is done via clicking on areas of the buildings of Venice. This action may bring up a digitised photo of a person at that location (plus a location graphic). Interaction is via speech bubble menus. The more info you gain about that person the more questions you can ask, so it is sensible to revisit characters.

You have the facilities to record photographs, quotes, etc via a camera and an organiser. Incidentally, the game includes a basic paint program plus clip-art (wigs, glasses, etc) which act as disguises. Finally, there is a bomb-disarming practice routine in the police station as you will have to do this for real at the end of the game.

Even though the presentation is superb, the game system could have been improved. Clicking on the building graphics in the hope of hitting the right spot to find a suspect to question is achieved by pure luck – why do the French constantly employ this device? It removes any illusion of skill. In addition, after a while, many of the features, like the location graphic windows, become very superficial. Murders in Venice certainly has many good points, although, more thought on implementation and design would have been appreciated.



PC (also Amiga, ST) £35.00 (import)

UNIVERSE 3

Omnitrend

So what happened to the other Universes? Well, from what I've heard, you've not missed much. Universe 3 is a different matter, however. You live in the Local Group, a colony which has been isolated from Earth for 300 years. You command a ship to re-establish diplomatic relations with Earth. The only problem is that there's a traitor onboard.

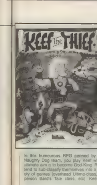
Universe 3 adopts a similar design and interface to Omnitrend's Paladin and Breach games. Control is via the keyboard or WIMP interface. Icons are available for movement and dropping objects. Examining objects can be done by moving up to them

Mirror

I hesitate to mention Mirrorsoft's first release this month because, according to the burnf, we are about to receive a RPG from the Bitmap Brothers... and may the Lord make us truly thankful. Yes, Cadever has you as a medieval sleuth on the trail of a mass murderer. Clues lie within a strange castle where a former search party met its grisly end. True to form, though, Cadever will incorporate some arcade action complete with overhead and 3-D isometric viewpoints. A Times of Lore basher perchance?

It's good to see a sequel to The Legend of the Sword on the way. Called The Final Battle, the follow-up sees Suzar escape from his prison, re-take the sword (what a waste of time the first game was then!) and imprison your comrades.

PSS's latest is set in the North Atlantic during World War II. Wolfpack includes a number of scenarios (submarine battles for example) and allows you to customise your



Amiga (also PC) £24.99

KEEF THE THIEF

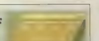
Electronic Arts

In this humourous RPG penned by The Naughty Dog team, you play Keef whose ultimate aim is to become God-King. RPGs tend to sub-classify themselves into a variety of genres (overhead Ultima-class, first person Bard's Tale class, etc). Keef fits nicely into the Bard's Tale slot but has several improvements over RPGs of similar ilk.

Along with the sensible 'sleep' factor indicating how weary you are, you have a variety of other abilities including combat. Combat is far more realistic and true to perspective in Keef than any other RPG in its class. In this respect it even exceeds SSI's Curse of the Azure Bonds, which has to shift to an external viewpoint. In Keef you have a narrow, first person perspective, line of sight and can turn to face your foe if they attack from behind. In another part of the screen is an overhead map showing the overall tactical position. You can advance and strike an opponent, after which the club or whatever is seen to strike your opponent's face.

Relevant stats are available showing the progress of the fight. Again this stays true to the perspective while allowing realistic combat — far better than the fictional combat of Dungeon Master, Bard's Tale, et al.

Finding spellbooks is essential, as each contains individual spells for specific uses. Interaction is achieved by clicking on characters in the graphic window and selecting



questions from a menu system. You can haggle when you buy items or you can steal them (you are a thief after all!).

Keef nearly didn't receive a Golden Scroll due to its high initial difficulty factor. However, Keef is not the only game (many of the classics are notoriously difficult, initially) to suffer from this so I did not penalise it — be careful to save frequently, though. There can be no doubt that, in its first person perspective class, Keef is top (naughty) dog.

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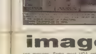
and selecting Examine from the verb menu (where other commands such as Wear, Break, etc, are listed). There are occasions when you can zoom into an object or person, which allows you to manipulate objects on a larger scale. However, most of the action is via a lookdown, Ultima-type view. Stats inform you of your character's well-being.



Universe 3 is simple to set up but can be a little tricky to use. I had trouble using the Zoom command from the keyboard although accessing it via the mouse was no problem. The plot is a strong point of the game but the speed isn't. Even though there are methods to quicken movement, things grind to a halt when many characters are onscreen at once. That said, however, Universe 3 is still a pleasant jaunt through the cosmos. Apparently Artronic are planning to import the game, but if you can't wait...

CONTACT: Computer Adventure World, Bank Buildings, 1a Charing Cross, Birkenhead L41 6EJ. Tel: (051) 6661132.

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images

own missions. Some great VGA graphics are also promised.

Larry Bond, co-author of Red Storm Rising (the novel and game), is back with a new product. Harpoon contains Larry's new naval warfare environment, within which you are a commander for either NATO or Warsaw Pact. PSS are importing Harpoon in this country through their Mirrorsoft connections — all are available on ST, Amiga and PC.

Good news for stumped adventurers. Official Secrets are releasing solution books to all of the Magnetic Scrolls adventures, priced at £2.50 each. They appear to be good value for money as they also include three-tier questions and answers, maps and a coding system so that you don't accidentally see the full solution. More information from: Official Secrets, PO Box 847, Harlow CM21 9PH.

On the other side of the Atlantic, I hear news of Police Blotter from US-based wargame specialists, Avalon Hill. There are seven cases to solve as you plod the streets of Queensport including such classics as Lincoln's Room and The Case of the Peculiar Corpse. Police Blotter is PC only and includes a map of Queensport, a rulebook and clue book.

Fans of Omnitrend's Breach (distributed by Artronic in the UK) will be glad to know that Breach II is on the way. The game includes much-needed enhancements, such as diagonal fire and movement, supression fire and line of sight.

Rumours abound that Dynamix (who produced Abrams Battle Tank) are working on an 'action' adventure currently called Agent. Apparently, Agent includes five different types of spy simulations.

PC owners should look out for Infocom's Shogun, which is well worth purchasing. The text scroll is a little slow but the overall game is still excellent. Another PC conversion is Micro Illusions' Faery Tale (remember that one?). Hailed as a breakthrough in RPG gaming when it appeared on the Amiga ages ago, the PC version is also well produced. EGA graphics are good with mediocre sound. Although a bit old, it's still well worth playing.

Amiga owners should look out for Sierra's Space Quest III and Lucasfilm's Maniac Mansion and Indiana Jones (Adventure). Each one is highly recommended offering similar graphics to the ST but much improved sound (and far fewer disk swaps!!).

Finally, did you know that the chap who is working on the graphics for Lucasfilm's Loom is none other than Mark Ferrari? The same fantasy artist who produced artwork for Chaosium's table-top Cthulhu RPG series.

Join me next issue for another thrilling installment on the column. You'll be okay as long as you don't look down.

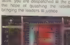
Paul Rigby, TGM, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.

C64 (also Amiga, ST) £19.95

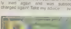
KAYDEN GARTH

EAS

Kayden Garth, the prison planet, has undergone a rebellion. All contact has been severed and it is believed prisoners are running riot. At the head of a four-man team, you are despatched to the planet in the hope of quashing the rebellion and bringing the leaders to justice.



You move your team, a single icon, over the landscape to enter towns, buildings and monster-infested dungeons. The range of characters available is good as are their range of skills. However, the fun stops there as the rest of the game is abysmal. Combat is far too simplistic, with the dungeons bland and featureless causing instant disorientation. In addition, combat in the dungeon brings up a simplistic combat screen with a backdrop of trees, fields and blue sky — in a dungeon? However, the worst point of the game is its terrible bugs. Wandering into a hospital I attempted to heal already healthy characters. Instead of offering an error message along the lines of your character does not need attention, I was charged for the treatment! I immediately tried again and was subsequently charged again! Take my advice — avoid it.



C64 (also PC, Amiga, ST £29.95) £19.99

WINDWALKER

Origin

When Moebius was released in 1985 it received a mixed reception in this country, so I asked Richard Garriott (aka Lord British), Origin's Vice President, what improvements the sequel would have. He promised improved graphics and, as well as good interaction, each one of the 30-60 people will be highly developed. He's right, too. The one aspect of Windwalker that most impressed me was the overall design. You really feel that the author has taken time to research his project to the full. Displaying over 160 different scenes and settings, you experience a real period atmosphere. For example, if you let your Honour deteriorate, villagers will ignore you. Your other attributes are Spirit, your lifeforce, Body, health and vigour, and Karma, show often you can be restored from death.

You begin as a lowly fisherman. Your task is to restore the Emperor to his throne by wandering the many islands of Khantun and defeating the evil Zhurong and Shen Jang the Alchemist. The overhead view shows your character via a picture icon which changes expression depending on your situation. Interaction is via nested menus.

Different professions have a bearing upon information given, merchants will be

able to tell you more of events abroad than villagers. Prayers and spells add to your armoury but your main weapon is your fighting skills. This arcade sideview is much improved over the original game as the moves include more frames (making animation smoother) whilst the realistic and graceful martial movements are varied. Many RPG players may not relish this area of the game but you should give it a chance. I enjoyed Windwalker and look forward to the 16-bit conversions.

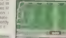
ST (also Amiga) £24.99

SUPERLEAGUE SOCCER

Impressions

My initial impression (no pun intended) of Superleague Soccer (SS) was that it may become the king of football strategy games. The depth is there. The usual managerial features are augmented by novel features such as player ratings for control, heading ability, morale, tackling and so on.

However, I always look forward to seeing



my team in action during the play sequence or, failing that, receiving some sort of feedback. SS has the unique feature of being able to control each player during the sequence — a sort of ultra-basic Kick Off. However, the implementation for this area is very poor. Control and player manipulation is slow and awkward. Once you have manoeuvred a player into a certain position the ball has already passed him. Subsequently, the only playable way of using the play sequence is to ask for an instant result where no action is seen. Without the feedback the game becomes rather lifeless.

Amiga (also PC, ST) £24.99

DAY OF THE PHARAOH

Rainbow Arts

It is your job, in Day of the Pharaoh, to rise through the ranks from a poor merchant to the exalted position of Pharaoh. To do this you must trade, marry into important families, fend off the natives, give sacrifices to the gods, dabble in gambling and so on.

As you gain wealth, your social status will increase, thus bringing the sought after power needed to take you to the top. There are a number of arcade sub-games, of which all require to be mastered if you are to be exalted by your people. However, I found that these sub-games spoiled the whole game. For a game of strategy they lacked any skill. The arrow firing, from a moving chariot, lacks control and is too simplified, the rock-evasion, in your boat, is

Version Update

PC £24.95

NEURO-MANCER

Interplay/Electronic Arts

William Gibson, father of cyberpunk: 'I never so much as touched a PC when I wrote Neuromancer. I wrote it on an ancient Hermes manual typewriter.' Yep, surprised me too. But nevertheless, Neuromancer, the book, was an acclaimed work, as was the original C64 computer game. It is no surprise, then, that the PC reaches similar heights. Coming on two 5.25-inch disks, PC Neuromancer gives us the first opportunity to see 16-bit graphics placed on top of the excellent gameplay which was already present in the C64 version. Offering non-linear solutions and skill development, while staying faithful to the novel, Neuromancer is a 'must-buy'. Take it away William: 'These days I use a beat-up Apple IIc and the word processing end of AppleWorks. I do have a modem but I don't really use it for anything. People expect me to write on something matte black with all the serial numbers sandpapered off.'

Machine update 90%

Amiga (also PC, ST) £24.99

MYSTERY OF THE MUMMY

Rainbow Arts

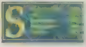
You are on the trail of ■ stolen mummy. But others are after the mummy and then there's the crime to solve and...

Mystery ■ the Mummy ■ an icon-controlled text/graphic adventure with nominal keyboard input. Displaying atmospheric charcoal/sepia graphics, the crux of the game involves driving around town collecting clues, objects and generally gaining as much information from everyone and everything as is possible. ■ addition there are two sequences which provide a break from the adventure. One ■ a diving sequence ■ find exhibits, the other involves interpreting evidence in a laboratory. You must not forget to eat, sleep and top-up the petrol for the car. This sort of needless realism injected into adventures only serves to slow the game and hinder your enjoyment as it serves no constructive purpose. ■ addition, too many locations are lifeless areas.

The rigid icon commands make you feel that you have little or no freedom to manoeuvre. Puzzles seem to hinge on mentioning the right name, at the right time, to the right person. A good example of the restricted design ■ the library sequence, where I wanted to read one of a list of books. Rather than picking up book one, reading it, dropping it and picking up book two, I had to read book one, exit the library, re-enter the library, read book two, etc! Frustratingly boring!

Mystery ■ the Mummy mixes interesting presentation ideas and fairly good interaction with, sadly, design faults that give the adventure an empty, unfulfilling atmosphere.

unbelievably easy. Good idea, Rainbow Arts, but a disappointing implementation.



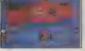
Amiga (also ST, PC) £24.95

SWORDS OF TWILIGHT

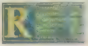
Free Fall Associates/Electronic Arts

Your quest, in Free Fall's latest RPG ■ ■ recover the Swords of Shambala. The game can be played by up ■ three players. ■ you play solo, you only control one character while the other two are computer controlled. Character choice has no real feeling of involvement as a preset database of characters are waiting ■ be chosen.

Twilight offers some genuinely innovative aspects: tiredness (fatigue or waking from sleep) or damage sustained during combat will slow down characters. Moods have an interesting effect on conversation, too. If you appear wary towards a stranger you may not receive info that would have been given to you if you had been friendly. I was impressed with all ■ these factors. However, a number of irritating points spoiled ■ possibly excellent game. The presentation could have been improved. Different worlds appeared to be rather monotonous. Controlling your characters can be frustrating. These supposedly intelligent characters can easily be led into a corner where they just bang their heads monotonously into a brick wall. Also, when you enter a room you are constantly challenged every time you re-enter. As if they have never seen you before.



Finally, although spellcasting has been handled well, combat is too simplistic. Merely moving into opponents and pressing fire shows a lack of thought. Swords of Twilight has many interesting features, however the designers appear to have concentrated only on certain areas and to the detriment of the rest of the game.



Version Update

Amiga £19.99

LASER SQUAD

Blade Software

Having been warmly welcomed on the ■ bit machines, I have been eager to see whether Laser Squad could make a successful transition to 16-bit. Although initially similar to Omnitrend's Breach, it's soon apparent that Laser Squad blows Breach clean out of the water. It is far superior in every way. Examples are movement and action in eight directions; the variety of fire; delayed explosives; close combat, etc. Sound has been well developed offering an excellent soundtrack and spot effects.

Graphics have also been improved. As well as the clever spot animation, other details, such as the interference on the scanner when it is first switched on, are much appreciated. There can be no doubt that Laser Squad is the best tactical strategy game on the Amiga at the moment. It is a strong candidate for the best strategy game of any sort on the Amiga! I am sure it will achieve similar high levels on the ST, too.

Machine update 93%

THE SEARCH FOR CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

Part Two

Christmas is worryingly near but let us take your mind off such things by continuing the TGM crew's weird Yuletide adventure. When last we left them a bizarre an' gruesome creature had emerged from one of Warren's seven orifices...

This animal just wasn't the sort of thing one beared to look at, like those disgusting mammal-digesting insects that make an unbearably frequent appearance on BBC nature programmes. But Robin, Dominic and Mark couldn't help but watch as the slimey, spikey creature flexed its tiny ebony limbs and produced a small pastel-shaded towel from about its 'person'. It dried itself carefully, liberally throwing Imperial Leather talcum powder under its armpits, then leapt into Roger's garden, whose house they stood outside.

'Well ber-lud-dee typical,' Dominic moaned as they watched the creature swallow handfuls of leaves from a nearby bush. It grew. The creature, that is, not the bush, which was becoming increasingly bedraggled by the second. It grew at an alarmingly rapid speed, like the amount of washing-up in a sink tends to do. From its initial six inches (size isn't important), it grew two feet, three feet, four. Then the now-quadruped grew in height also, relentlessly shovelling in food, like Mark at a software PR lunch, until it was a full eight feet tall.

Coincidentally enough, it also had eight feet by now, which it used to haul its vast insect-like body up the front of Roger's house, gouging out great chunks of brick, mortar and assorted masonary as it went. It disappeared over the roof, sending tiles, the TV aerial and a disoriented door-to-door salesman crashing to the ground.

'Great. That's just the sort of unsociable response you expect from a recently hatched space alien billions of miles from home and who's recently failed its driving test for the fourth time,' Robin commented astutely.

Gathering up Warren, in as much control of himself as can ever be hoped for, the four approached the front door of the house, gazing up at the screen of the Mac II computerised doorbell.

'DO YOU REALLY WANT TO RING THIS DOORBELL?' a scrolling message asked as the Mac detected them. 'I MEAN, REALLY, I *AM* AN ALL-SEEING, ALL-DOING, ALL-*TIMES* CROSSWORD-SOLVING MACINTOSH COMPUTER, AND I'M NOT *ENTIRELY* SURE YOU'RE THE SORT OF PEOPLE I WANT AT THIS CHRISTMAS PARTY.'

'Yes yes yes,' Mark stumbled as he mounted the doorstep. 'Yes yes, we do want to ring the bell and come in, thank you kindly.' Robin, Dom and Warren hadn't as agreeable an attitude to the 'doorbell', thusfar loathing every minute of Christmas, but restrained themselves from smashing its egotistical diodes.

'YOU'RE ABSOLUTELY POSITIVE ABOUT THIS? YOU'RE NOT GOING TO CHANGE YOU'RE MIND? YOU'RE NOT BEING THE TEENSYIST BIT HASTY HERE?'

'No!' the un-festive trio snarled in unison, a bit like a barber shop quartet except with one missing — the irritating short blond one, thankfully.

'REALLY? YOU'RE NOT TELLING PORKIES TO YOUR UNCLE MA-'

'Just open the sodding door!' Robin yelled, almost dropping his precious — but unreliable — sampler.

The door complied and immediately they were met by Roger, TGM designer, roving editor and fan of a certain computer. 'Um, go straight on to the living room,' Roger muttered without looking up from the screen of his Mac portable.

The party was going in what could optimistically be described as full swing — ZZAP! and CRASH editorial teams and other Newsfield staff hanging around in huddled bunches, like over-familiar bananas. It'd gone well initially but the Newsfield postboy had failed to deliver the presents — not good. Jonathan 'cold hands' Rignall, the production manager, was particularly irate, as the co-ordinated preszy opening was now at least 43 minutes behind schedule.

For the *Dynamic Trio*... er, make that the *Vaguely More Happy Than Morrissey On A Really Bad Day Trio* (maxim: *apathy rules if you like but I'm not particularly bothered*), it was clear that this wasn't the place they'd find the much-needed Christmas spirit.

The lumbering Mark continued to be the happy-go-lucky misfit, rushing around hello-ing, enthusing about the Christmasness of it all and bludgeoning people into playing party games, most notably the ever-popular Pin The Blame On The Staff Writer. Robin decided to make the most of it and set up his sampler, a tangle of wires soon developing on the coffee table. Warren was rather pleased to be able to use his recent trauma as an excuse to drink copious amounts of alcohol and Dom went to chat to the Zzap! team, notably to gloat over his defeats of Ed Stuart at Kick Off.

The party went on, the drinks flowed (mostly down Robin and Warren's throats) and Mark became the first person to eat three tubsful of Twiglets without taking them out the packet. Robin was wandering dejectedly around, microphone in hand, trying to find interesting sounds to sample: he shaked things, dropped things, hit things, performed the Jimmy Cagney tap-dance routine from Yankee Doodle Dandy on things, all in the search for the elusive mega-sample. Dom was still being his seathing, Tory MP-style self (Zzap! editorial were all marginal-SDP-in-a-pretty-damn-tight-situation), and Warren was examining the underside of the coffee table.

Robin was trying to coax a rubber plant into saying 'Check this out!' just before it happened. The plant had a terrible headache so could only manage a half-hearted rustling of its leaves, which was a much less dynamic sample but with the price of Baby Bio these days what can you expect.

There was a savage grunt and a loud thud. Most people thought it was Mark. But no, he was busy on the fourth word of Gone With The Wind. An ear-splitting crash hushed everyone into a sudden silence.

It was quiet. *Very* quiet. You could've heard half a pin drop onto a very comfy cushion. A long, monsterous howl cut the air like a remarkably sharp knife, echoing in the cold, dark night outside. Now it was *really* quiet, but a silence soon broken by an excited voice...

'I'm having that!' exclaimed Robin, having found the sound he'd been after all night. He bounded out into the back garden, microphone lead trailing behind him, and an approximately conscious Warren followed.

By the time Warren staggered into the garden, the creature, now taller still, was holding Robin by his ankle and dangling him just above its gaping jaws, like a Roman with grapes. It had lowered Robin's head onto its tongue when it happened to glance in Warren's direction.

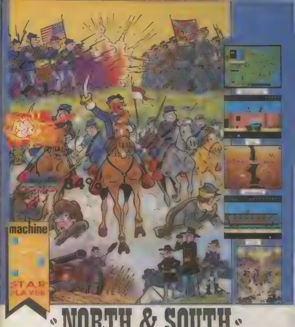
'MOTHER!!' it cried and flungs its arms wide, sending Robin flying over a nearby hedge. It advanced, Warren backing away — an energetic hug from this offspring would be fatal. He bumped into a wall; he had nowhere to go, the creature reached out... and was hit by a beam of golden light, which shrank it down, down into nothing.

As Dom joined Warren and a muddy Robin, a winged figure sparkling with magical light descended to hover above them.

'Fear not, my friends,' the Angel Patience said, 'be calm and Christmas spirit will be thine. You shall have good will and the Queen's speech won't seem so bad...' And with that the Angel flew gracefully to the heavens, leaving the trio to wonder whether they'd really drunk *that* much.

But then our heroes DID enjoy the Christmas, the best ever, being kind to others, giving presents and money to the poor and sickeningly corny things like that. But generally getting very drunk and falling into flowerbeds.

THE END



NORTH & SOUTH

CHAAARGE !! Dive into the hilarious world of the Belgium comic book "LES TUNIQUES BLEUES" (CAUVIN & LAMBIL). For one or two players, you are either Yankee or Confederate so re-creating the true atmosphere of the American Civil War. NORTH & SOUTH, an original, explosive cocktail of strategy and arcade. Surround your enemy using the strategic map of the American East Coast. Crush them on the super arcade battle field. Send your best men to stop the gold-filled trains, and then rush the forts to free the enemy occupied towns. NORTH & SOUTH, a game filled with options. Start the game from a choice of four different years, three levels of difficulty and a special disaster mode which includes violent storms stopping all movement of troops, re-inforcements arriving from Europe, and not forgetting the Indians and Mexicans whose only pleasure in life is attacking you!

If that wasn't enough to wet your appetite, you can also choose between a "strategy only" game and an "strategy-arcade game", and with the superb 2 players version that has to be played to be believed, it only leaves us to give the order "To your sabres!"

LES TUNIQUES BLEUES -
CAUVIN LAMBIL DUPUIS

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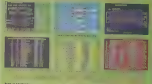

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The Games machine

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NEXT MONTH

■ As The Games Machine enters the 1990s we all figured it was time for a facelift. Who wants boring old Eighties coverage of games when we're entering the most exciting decade of this century! Here at The Games Machine, we've already got the technology for the Nineties and now it's time to use it to produce the magazine of the Nineties. Next month's issue will have a COMPLETELY new look to it. But does this mean that any sections of the magazine will suffer? Of course not.

■ We'll be covering everything of interest to anyone with a SPECTRUM, AMSTRAD, COMMODORE 64, ATARI ST, AMIGA, ARCHIMEDES, IBM PC, SEGA, NINTENDO, PC ENGINE, ATARI LYNX, GAMEBOY... this list will no doubt increase as the year goes on, but be in no doubt that The Games Machine will, as the title suggests, be covering EVERYTHING to do with games machines.

■ Obviously games software will be given the biggest and best coverage, although that won't detract from the more interesting aspects of owning a computer. Graphics are exciting for everyone, so's computer-controlled music — we'll be covering both. We won't be giving boring techy coverage, it'll be stuff that's accessible to everyone.

Owning a computer should be fun — whatever you want to do with it. Get next month's issue and experience the future of computer magazines now!

You'll have to wait till JANUARY 11 for the next TGM experience.

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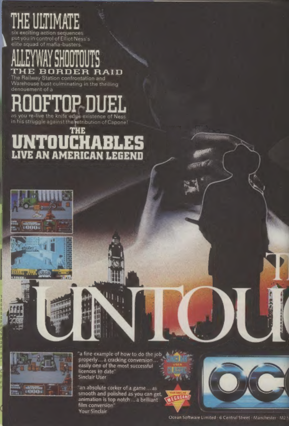

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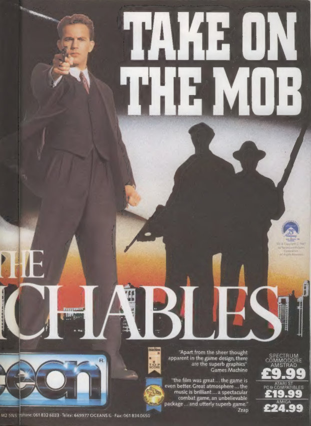
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